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ABSTRACT

A curriculum was developed that is intended to be a practical interpretation of Francis Kazemek's metaphor of adult basic and literacy education (ABLE) as storytelling. The curriculum, which is intended to encourage adult basic education (ABE) students to develop literacy skills by reading/writing about their experiences and visions, is designed to be used in conjunction with a library of books related to all five General Educational Development (GED) subjects and to adult personal and workplace concerns. A curriculum guide explaining how ABE/GED instructors can investigate the metaphor of ABLE as storytelling and help students use fiction and nonfiction as a basis for telling, reading, and writing stories was developed. Student performance data, project entry/exit interviews, and students' written and oral evaluations of the curriculum all supported the continued use of storytelling activities in ABE programs. (The bibliography contains 38 storytelling references. Also included is a curriculum guide, the "ABLE Storytelling Manual," containing 10 chapters of guidelines and materials for using storytelling as a vehicle for basic skill development, and the text of Kazemek's essay "'In Ignorance to View a Small Portion and Think That All': The False Promise of Job Literacy.") (MN)

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ED 376 326

Adult Basic & Literacy Education as Storytelling:

A Reading/Writing Project

1993-94 353 Project No. 98-4027

*****

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353 Project No. 98-4027 in the amount of $6,199.00 to L.I.U. 12 for the period from 7/1/93 to 6/30/94.

Copies of this project report and manual can be obtained from AdvancE at the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Resource Center or from the Western Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Resource Center.

The activity which is the subject of this project's report was supported in part by the U.S. Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Education or the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and no official endorsement should be inferred.

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Abstract

Title: **Adult Basic and Literacy Education as Storytelling: A Reading/Writing Project**
Project No.: 98-4027 Funding: $6,199.00

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Purpose: The project was a practical application or interpretation of Francis Kazemek's metaphor of Adult Basic and Literacy Education(ABLE) as Storytelling.

Procedures: The project team designed, conducted, evaluated, and published the results of a curriculum development project which focused on ABE student reading and writing which emphasized their experiences and visions(stories) for themselves and their families.

Summary of Findings: The team collected student performance data, conducted entry and exit interviews, and reviewed students' written and oral responses to methods and materials. All indications support the continued use of or establishment of storytelling activities in ABE programs, especially in open-entry, open-exit programs.

Comments: The key physical component of this project was a collection of books related to all five GED subject areas and to adult personal and workplace concerns. The project team used low-cost acquisition strategies to develop an on-site, easy-loan library for both student and staff use. The team acquired books of poems, plays, fiction, and works of nonfiction which helped students and staff to take a more in-depth approach to student preparation for and beyond the GED tests. The project team encouraged students to read these books and share their understandings and opinions with instructors and other adult students. The team also developed a manual for ABE staff use which is not similar to existing pre-GED and GED texts. Instead, the manual presents many illustrations of how ABE students and their instructors can tell, listen to, read, write, and share stories of all kinds, fiction and nonfiction.

Product: The project team produced a curriculum manual for ABE/GED instructors who wish to support and investigate the metaphor of Adult Basic & Literacy Education as Storytelling.

Descriptors:

Preface

Because this project's product, our ABLE Storytelling Manual, contains both a detailed background explanation for our 1993-94 353 project, several pages of our attempt to bring ABE theory and practice together, and detailed illustrations of storytelling applications in ABE settings, much of the manual itself is what would normally appear in a 353 project report. We decided to make a few revisions for reader ease and to publish several of the manual pages in this report because we wanted to make sure interested readers would get enough information from the report to appreciate how seriously we stand by Kazemek's storytelling metaphor for Adult Basic and Literacy Education.

This report and the project manual is available through AdvancE at PDE or through the Western Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Resource Center. Of course, the Lincoln I.U.(No. 12), and the project coordinators in particular, would welcome your comments and questions. Names, addresses, and phone numbers for dissemination and resource support appear on the title and abstract pages above.

This organization of this report is based on the original grant narrative and project objectives. True to Francis Kazemek's thoughts on program assessment or evaluation, we have prepared a separate, short, but mainly holistically determined, evaluation chapter.

StoryPower Lines

We urge our readers to read Francis Kazemek's essay, " 'In Ignorance to View a Small Portion and Think That All': The False Promise of Job Literacy." We have included the complete piece in the manual because we didn't want to spend hours trying to explain in our words what we think Kazemek is saying clearly and courageously. We believe in his new vision for Adult Basic and Literacy Education. Years ago, when we started to investigate whole language practices in ABE, Frank Kaezemek encouraged us to keep fighting the good fight. He has continued to lead by his practice and his writing. We will tell you more of this story in our introduction to this report. Right now, we offer these StoryPower Lines to get the whole experimental-demonstration report process underway.

* * * * *

"This essay is about visions of literacy and literacy education; those that see only a small portion and think it is all, and other visions that are wider, richer, and sustained by the imagination and its myriad possibilities. My purpose is to explore what literacy is for. Any vision of literacy, however narrow or expansive, includes underlying beliefs about why people should know how to read and write. I argue against the current and widespread public perception of literacy and adult literacy education as primarily, if not exclusively, work-related. Such a vision is inadequate and ultimately dangerous in a democratic society(1991, p. 51)."

* * * * *

We hope you'll be willing to read about what we've been doing here at The Learning Place after you have read about Kazemek's vision. We agree with his statement that literacy education must be concerned with "the whole individual in all of her(or his) complexity(p. 55)."

The Genesis of this Project: An Introduction to our Project Report and to our Manual for ABLE Storytelling

We, (and the first-person plural is the way we will write to you in much of our report) dear reader, are friends and practitioners of Adult Basic and Literacy Education. We live and work in Pennsylvania. Because our state's Adult Basic Education(ABE) agency is now called the ABLE Bureau, we felt comfortable using the acronym ABLE as part of our project's title. ABLE means Adult Basic and Literacy Education, and that's what Francis Kazemek means when he writes about what he does and what he hopes we will do if we work with adults in basic literacy, ABE, GED, and ESL programs. ABLE makes us think of able, and that's what we hope we'll be, and you too, if we all try to take theory and metaphor and bring them to our practice of ABE. We hope we'll be able to inform you, our highly valued reader, about the ways we have been interpreting Kazemek's new vision for our profession. We also hope you will be able to use what we present here in this report and in our manual. We hope our stories and those of our very able students will prove to be worthy of Kazemek's metaphor.

In the May 1992 issue of our Adult Basic and Literacy Education Newsletter, What's the Buzz?, Daniel R. Partin, then our state's Section 353 Special Projects Adviser, expressed his enthusiasm for an article he had just read from a 1991 edition of Journal of Education. Dan's article was entitled, " Seeing the Forest Despite the Trees." After reading this very favorable review of Kazemek's article (or essay if you are into GED's Literature and the Arts), we wrote to Dan and asked him to send us a copy of the original Kazemek piece. Dan did send the essay to us; we read it and reread it, and then we thought about how Kazemek might put his vision into practice if he were among us ABE practitioners who were willing to give it a try. We had some ideas about how Kazemek might hope to see us and our ABE students sharing and learning together through storytelling because we had been following

Introduction to Report(cont.)

Frank's work and visions for ABE for several years as he had been and is continuing to describe his views on ABE practice in his publications.

Dan's review inspired us to go to Kazemek once more for some staff development ideas. Kazemek's essay was and still is truly the seminal work for this 1993-94 353 project. We feel able to continue what we and our students have started without any additional funding. We are committed to going forward with our interpretation of what Kazemek feels we should be doing in our ABE programs. As ABE practitioners, we feel better about what we and our students are doing. We can tell you with much more confidence than we had a year ago that Kazemek's new vision for ABE or ABLE is worth exploring, interpreting, and putting into practice. If you read only one thing more in our report and manual, we hope it will be the copy of Kazemek's essay which we're pleased to have received special permission to include. We thank Dan Partin for taking the time to write about Kazemek's new vision for what we do, and we hope Francis (Frank)Kazemek's publications will become or will continue to be a part of your ABLE staff development or professional library.

There's a story here. Dan Partin read and then wrote about Kazemek's refreshing views on ABLE. We read Dan's article, devoured Kazemek's essay, and then decided to interpret his metaphor by taking some risks and spending a lot of time trying to put our interpretation into practice as whole-language activities in our local ABE setting, The Lincoln Intermediate Unit's(I.U. 12's)The Learning Place in York, Pennsylvania. We hope you, and we really mean it when we call you our 'dear reader,' will continue to build or add to this project. As we point out in our chapter on using poetry to generate storytelling activities, most of the important things we work at building in our lives are never completely finished. We affirm the hopes and dreams of our ABE students by continuing to build on the firm foundations they and their stories have helped to construct.

Who are We?

We have already told you that we are ABLE practitioners. Two of us were on the 353 "payroll," mostly after hours and on weekends, but all of us are adult education instructors in non-353-funded programs. The two of us who wrote this report have been advocates of storytelling activities and whole-language practices for many years, but we were not aware of each other's interests or each other's work until we met about a year ago. The "I" in most of what we write about ABE practice in this report is the voice of George Rutledge, a veteran ABE practitioner and 353 project director. The "I" in much of the background and theory presentation which this project's manual must contain is the voice of Rauthild Orleth-Diener, a cultural anthropologist by training and a relative newcomer to ABE. We both have a couple academic degrees we could elaborate on, but we don't want to get into that business in this report(see report appendix for resume information). The "we" that made this project work includes all of our ABE colleagues and many of our ABE students here at The Learning Place. There was no separate 353-funded program. All of the participation and all of the stories were voluntary contributions by students and staff. The non-353 staff contributors are listed here because there would have been no storytelling activities without their direct involvement. We are lucky to have them as colleagues.

Project Contributors:

Carol Almeida, ABE/GED/ESL Instructor, Project A.B.E.
Wendy Gillman-Bibler, ABE/GED Instructor, P.R.E.P. Program
Anne Bowman, ESL Instructor, York Adult Learning Center
Deanna Bowman, ABE/GED Instructor, Project A.B.E.
Deborah Detzel, ESL Instructor, York Adult Learning Center
Janet Rego, ABE/GED Instructor, UPI and SPOC Plus Programs
Vicki Rutledge, ABE/GED Instructor, York Adult Learning Center
Anita Smith, Office Support Specialist, The Learning Place
Ellen Tietbohl, Case Manager, SPOC Plus Program
Patricia Wallace, Case Manager, P.R.E.P. Program

George's Very Short Story

Readers who are interested in learning more about the students we work with and some of the previous experimental-demonstration and action-research projects we have conducted should consult the opening paragraphs of our manual chapters on the uses of autobiographical writing and poetry in storytelling activities. Switching to George's "I," I can tell you candidly that this project would not have been as fruitful had I remained the primary 353-funded director or coordinator. The project's story line and general development were greatly enriched by my almost-by-chance meeting with Rauthild. Her story is quite interesting, as are most stories about how people come to jobs and careers in ABE.

Rauthild's Short Story

My earliest encounters with folk tales can be characterized as unbearable horror. Only rarely was I able to hold up under the suspense and fears created by parents trying to rid themselves of their children in the dark woods or a beautiful girl's receiving a poisonous apple from a wicked old queen.

This early love-hate relationship, to give it a name, turned out to be a source of energy for many years of research. An exploration of the meaning of folk tales and my strong personal reactions to some of them began in 1979 under the guidance of a Jungian psychoanalyst. The seminars and lectures on the depth psychological approach to folk tales and myths which I attended and later held myself were of great influnence on my studies in Cultural Anthropology at the University in Freiburg, Germany.

In 1985-86 I spent nine months with the Ifugao people in the Philippines, where I devoted my time to the collection and translation of their oral traditions, especially their magical tales.

What This Project Is and What it Isn't

This project is our interpretation of the kinds of ABE activites that would be in harmony with Kazemek's metaphor of adult basic and literacy education as STORYTELLING. It is a project of explanation and demonstration. We have tried to give you, esteemed and willing reader, plenty of theory and sufficient practice so that you can look at what you do or at what others are doing in ABE programs and then decide for yourself if you agree with Kazemek's stand and with our modest attempt to put some meat and muscle on his philosophical framework. We are talking about how we approach our jobs as ABE practitioners who are interested in giving our students opportunities to learn more about themselves and others. We want our students to do more of the acting and less of the being acted upon. We want them to have the attitudes and academic tools that will keep them moving toward their goals and dreams. We think Kazemek's new vision is saner, healthier, and more promising than the often-dominant consumerism metaphor. We agree with his view that we cannot afford to ignore the "narrative nature of human existence(p. 61)." This project's product is our ABLE Storytelling Manual, a document that is the result of what most practitioners will, we hope, see as a kind of professional growth exercise in curriculum development.

What our manual isn't is an ABE/GED/ESL curriculum guide. There are many fine and useful curriculum documents available through ABE resource libraries/clearinghouses and from several commercial publishing companies. There are curriculum guides of all kinds for ABE practitioners to adopt or adapt. What we couldn't find a few years ago was a document which showed us plenty of ABE-based applications of the storytelling metaphor. That's why we decided to develop our own manual for ourselves and maybe for interested readers like you to consider. It's not a comprehensive guide to a particular ABE curriculum. As Kazemek wrote in "Whole Language and Adult Literacy Education," and as we apply his whole language principles to our applications of his storytelling metaphor, "it is the theoretical orientation or perspective which is primary; the specific activities grow out of that(1989, p. 4)." We hope you will read this manual and then start writing or telling your own stories about what you and your ABE students are saying, hearing, reading, and writing.

Finally, patient reader, we want to emphasize that our project was not an attack on job-literacy, workplace-literacy, or employment-oriented ABE programs. There are many fine ABE programs across the country that are helping adults to get and keep jobs. We have no desire to enter into a "Battle of the Metaphors." Instead, we try to accentuate the positive - and that, we proclaim, there is plenty of - in Kazemek's new vision for Adult Basic and Literacy Education.

Excerpt from Grant Narrative

"Project Description:

The staff of the Lincoln Intermediate Unit's ABE/GED/ESL programs at The Learning Place, in support of 1993-94 Priority B3(Special Experimental Projects involving the Use of Innovative Methods: Systems, Materials, and Programs/Curricula) for 353 Projects, proposes to design, develop, conduct, evaluate, and publish the results of a curriculum development project which will focus on the non-text reading and writing of ABE/GED students. Because many GED preparation programs do not seem to encourage their students to read for and beyond the requirements of the actual GED tests and because the project staff is committed to the new vision and new metaphor of Adult Literacy Education as Storytelling advanced by Francis Kazemek(Journal of Education, 1991), they will develop and describe an acquisition procedure and a low-cost instructional approach that other ABE programs can adapt or adopt."

Project Goals and Objectives:

We are pleased to report that our original grant narrative statement above and the original project goals which follow remain as accurate descriptions of what motivated and guided the development of this 353 project.

Objectives:

"a.) Develop an extensive list of at least a few hundred plays, poems, novels, short stories, essays, commentaries, and nonfiction related to all five GED subject areas and to personal/ career growth opportunities that ABE practitioners can acquire in their attempt to develop on-site lending libraries or collections."

We enjoyed the process of identifying and looking for these non-text(99.9%) books. Below is a sampling of the books we acquired. Bold type will show some GED connections.

A Selection of Books in the ABLE Storytelling Library:

Ackroyd, Peter - The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde(Fiction, L & A-92)

Adamson, Joy - Born Free(NF, **Sci., SS, L & A**-92)

Anderson, Walter - Read With Me(**NF, Literacy, Motivation**-92)

Amery, Jean - At the Mind's Limits(NF, **Philos., Hist., L & A**-92)

Asimov, Isaac - The Relativity of Wrong(**Sci.**-92)

Bach, Alice & J. Cheryl Exum - Moses' Ark: Stories from the Bible(L & A-92)

Baker, Russell - So This Is Depravity(**Essays, L & A**-92)

Barthelme, Donald - The King(Fiction, L & A-92)

Berg, Stephen(Ed.) - In Praise of What Persists(NF, Hist., L & A-92)

Berger, Thomas - Nowhere(Fiction, Sci-Fi, L & A-92)

Berger, Thomas - Reinhart's Women(Fiction, Home Econ., L & A-92)

Bettelheim, Bruno - Freud's Vienna and Other Essays(NF, Hist., **Psych. & Soc.**, L & A-93)

Sampling of ABLE Storytelling Library(cont.)

Binyan, Liu - A Higher Kind of Loyalty(NF, Hist., L & A-92)

Bowles, Paul - The Sheltering Sky(Fiction, Geog., L & A-92)

Canetti, Elias - Earwitness: Fifty Characters(Short Essays/Sketches, L & A-92)

Cheever, John - The Stories of John Cheever(Fiction, L & A-92)

Cheever, John - The Wapshot Scandal(Fiction, L & A-92)

Ciardi, John - You Read to Me, I'll Read to You(Literacy: Children & Adults, L & A-93)

Coover, Robert - Gerald's Party(Fiction, L & A)

Cormier, Robert - I Have Words to Spend: Reflections of a Small-Town Editor(NF, Essays, Hist., L & A-93)

Del Guidice, Daniele - Lines of Light(Fiction, Sci., L & A-92)

Delillo, Don - Libra(A Novel): (Fiction, Hist., L & A-92)

Doctorow, E.L. - Billy Bathgate(A Novel): (Fiction, Hist., L & A-92)

Doctorow, E.L. - Lives of the Poets: A Novella and Six Stories(Fiction, L & A-92)

Donleavy, J.P. - The Saddest Summer of Samuel S.(Fiction, L & A-92)

Ford, Richard - Rock Springs(Fiction, L & A-92)

Gaddis, William - Carpenter's Gothic(Fiction, L & A-92)

Gallant, Mavis - Paris Notebooks: Essays and Reviews(NF, Hist., L & A-92)

Goodman, Ellen - Close to Home(NF, Columns/Essays, L & A-92)

Heller, Joseph - God Knows(Fiction, OT Hist., L & A-92)

Hernton, Calvin C. - The Sexual Mountain and Black Women Writers(NF, Soc., L & A-93)

Hersey, John - Hiroshima(Fiction/NF, Hist., L & A-92)

Hoagland, Edward - African Calliope: A Journey to the Sudan(NF, Hist., Geog., L & A-92)

Ishiguro, Kazuo - A Pale View of Hills(Fiction, Hist., L & A-92)

Sampling of ABLE Storytelling Library(cont.)

Kaminsky, Marc - Hiroshima(Poetry, Hist., L & A-93)

Kaufmann, Walter - The Portable Nietzsche(Hist., L & A-92)

Kawabata, Yasunari - Snow Country(Fiction, L & A-92)

Kazan, Elia - A Life(NF, Autobio., Hist., L & A-93)

Kennedy, William - Ironweed(Fiction, Hist., L & A-92)

Kipling, Rudyard - Captain's Courageous(Fiction, Hist., L & A-92)

Kornblatt, Joyce Reiser - Breaking Bread(Fiction, L & A-92)

Kosinski, Jerzy - Steps(Fiction, L & A-92)

Kundera, Milan - The Art of the Novel(L & A-92)

Kundera, Milan - The Unbearable Lightness of Being(Fiction, L & A-92)

Levi, Primo - The Drowned and the Saved(NF, Hist., L & A, Philos.-92)

Levi, Primo - The Mirror Maker: Stories & Essays(NF, Hist., L & A-92)

Levi, Primo - Other People's Trades(NF, Essays, Hist., L & A-93)

Lind, Jakov - The Inventor(Fiction, L & A-92)

Lind, Jakov - Soul of Wood(Fiction, L & A-92)

Llosa, Maria Vargas - The Real Life of Alejandro Mayta(Fiction, Hist.-92)

Lopez, Barry - Arctic Dreams(NF, Hist., Sci., L & A-92)

Lopez, Barry - Desert Notes/River Notes(NF, Sci., L & A-92)

Mahfouz, Naguib - Autumn Quail(Fiction, Geog., L & A-92)

Mahfouz, Naguib - Wedding Song(Fiction, L & A-92)

Malamud, Bernard - The Fixer(Fiction, L & A-92)

Malamud, Bernard - Pictures of Fidelman(Fiction, L & A-92)

Marquez, Gabriel Garcia - Chronicle of a Death Foretold(Fiction, L & A-92)

Sampling of ABLE Storytelling Library(cont.)

Marquez, Gabriel Garcia - Collected Stories(Fiction, L & A-92)

Marquez, Gabriel Garcia - The General in His Labyrinth(Fiction, Hist., L & A-92)

Marquez, Gabriel Garcia - No One Writes to the Colonel(Fiction, L & A-92)

Mason, Bobbie Ann - Love Life(Stories): (Fiction, L & A-92)

McConkey, James - To a Distant Island(Fiction, Geog., L & A-92)

McCullers, Carson - The Ballad of the Sad Cafe & Other Stories(Fiction, L & A-92)

Miller, Arthur - Incident at Vichy(Drama, Hist., L & A-92)

Mishima, Yukio - Runaway Horses(Fiction, Hist., L & A-92)

Morrison, Toni - Beloved(A Novel): (Fiction, L & A-92)

Nabokov, Vladimir - Glory(Fiction, L & A-92)

Nabokov, Vladimir - Mary(Fiction, Hist., L & A-92)

Naipaul, V.S. - A House for Mr. Biswas(Fiction, Hist.-92)

Oates, Joyce Carol - Do With Me What You Will(Fiction, L & A-92)

Oates, Joyce Carol - A Garden of Earthly Delights(Fiction, L & A-92)

Ozick, Cynthia - The Messiah of Stockholm(Fiction, L & A-92)

Percy, Walker - Love in the Ruins(Fiction, Sci-Fi, L & A-92)

Percy, Walker - The Thanatos Syndrome(Fiction, Sci.-Fi, L & A-92)

Powell, Dawn - The Wicked Pavilion(Fiction, L & A-92)

Proust, Marcel - Swann in Love(Fiction, L & A-92)

Pynchon, Thomas - Gravity's Rainbow(Fiction, Hist., L & A-92)

Pynchon, Thomas - V.(A Novel): (Fiction, L & A-92)

Rosenberg, David(Ed.) - Testimony: Contemporary Writers Make the Holocaust Personal(NF, Hist., L & A-92)

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Sampling of ABLE Storytelling Library(cont.)

Roth, Philip - The Counterlife(Fiction, L & A-92)

Roth, Philip - Goodbye, Columbus(Fiction, L & A-92)

Roth, Philip - Reading Myself and Others(NF, L & A-92)

Shute, Nevil - On The Beach(Fiction, L & A-92)

Sillitoe, Alan - The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner(Fiction, L & A-92)

Singer, Isaac B. - The King of the Fields(Fiction, Hist., L & A-92)

Solotaroff, Ted - A Few Good Voices in My Head(NF, Essays, L & A-92)

Sontag, Susan - Under the Sign of Saturn: Essays(NF, Lit. Crit., Soc., L & A-93)

Stegner, Wallace - The Sound of Mountain Water(NF/Fiction, Geog., L & A-92)

Stone, Robert - Children of Light(Fiction, L & A-92)

Tan, Amy - The Joy Luck Club(Fiction, Hist., L & A-92)

Thoreau, Henry - Thoreau on Man and Nature(compiled by A. Volkman-NF, L & A-92)

Trillin, Calvin - If You Can't Say Something Nice(Essays, L & A-92)

Tyler, Anne - If Morning Ever Comes(Fiction, L & A-92)

Updike, John - Assorted Prose(NF/Fiction, L & A-92)

Updike, John - Of The Farm(Fiction, L & A-92)

Updike, John - Pigeon Feathers and Other Stories(Fiction, L & A-92)

Updike, John - S.(A Novel): (Fiction, L & A-92)

Vidal, Gore - At Home(NF, Essays, Hist., L & A-92)

Vonnegut, Kurt - Bluebeard(A Novel): (Fiction, L & A-92)

Vonnegut, Kurt - Mother Night(Fiction, L & A-92)

Warren, Robert Penn - Night Rider(Fiction, L & A-92)

Sampling of ABLE Storytelling Library(cont.)

Weiss, Theodore - The Man from Porlock: Engagements, 1944-1981(NF, L & A: Poetry Crit.-92)

Whitman, Walt - The Portable Walt Whitman(Poetry, L & A-92)

Wiesel, Elie - The Fifth Son(Fiction, Hist., L & A-92)

Wiesel, Elie - A Jew Today(NF, Essays, Hist., Religion, L & A-92)

Wiesel, Elie - Legends of Our Time(Hist., L & A-92)

Wiesel, Elie - The Oath(Fiction, Hist., L & A-92)

Wiesel, Elie - Twilight(A Novel): (Fiction, Hist., L & A-92)

Wiesel, Elie - Zalmen, or the Madness of God(Drama/Fiction, Hist.-92)

Wouk, Herman - Don't Stop the Carnival(Fiction, L & A-92)

Zolotow, Charlotte - My Friend John(Fiction, Children, L & A-93)

* * * * *

Project Objectives(cont.)

"b.) Develop and describe a low-cost way of acquiring these works."

This particular challenge was actually a joy to pursue. We'll repeat selected parts of our manual's third chapter for persons mainly interested in this acquisition process because it was a key physical component of our project.

"c.) Actually acquire such a collection as proof that other ABE programs can adapt or adopt this approach through the efforts of ABE instructors and volnteers."

Below we offer parts of pp. 22-43 of our ABLE Storytelling Manual so that this report can be used as a separate resource. We, of course, hope that interested readers will read and study the whole manual.

Developing A Low-Cost, Easy-Loan, On-Site ABLE Storytelling Library

In 1992-93 we officially began(at least, that's what one of us told the IRS)the process of donating books to The Learning Place in York. Most of these books were books which we had originally purchased for ourselves because we wanted to read them. Having read all or parts of them and having no place to house them at home, we decided, after much soul searching and discussion among ourselves and with our children and spouses, that it might be a good idea to bring our books to The Learning Place. After all, we could still re-read them or rediscover them in their new home. The point that we want to make in this report is that good books in our bookcases at home and on our reading tables and piled dozens deep on our bedroom and office or den floors at home weren't being read. By bringing them to our adult learning center, one at a time or several at a time in box after box, someone else, student or staff, might have an opportunity to spend some time with them, to get something useful and encourag- from them. Now, after two years of a conscious effort to acquire a low-cost, easy-loan, on-site ABLE(Adult Basic and Literacy Education)Storytelling Library - the 1993-94 year, of course, being the time of the 353-supported book acquisition process - we are pleased to say that all of our book-gathering energies have been well worth the time, money, and fuss.

Even though an excellent public library, York's Martin Memorial Library, is just three blocks from our ABE site, we felt at the time we started, and maybe even more so now, that assembling a few hundred assorted books into an easy-access library would do far more good than harm(we really haven't come up with any negative results yet). Will our ABE students be less likely to use our city and county library system while they are enrolled in one or more of our programs here? On the contrary, they have probably used local public library and school district library facilities even more than they would have had they not been involved in one or more of our programs. We have walked up to the library with them, and we have facilitated the library-joining process for at least a few of them. We have also helped to arrange family literacy training and involvement for those of our ABE students who have expressed an interest in participating in the York County Literacy Council's related programs. We have seen that coming across a book of interest here might lead a student to look elsewhere for more books by the same author or for other books on the topic the student is investigating or studying. Our little on-site library isn't competing with other libraries for funding or for users.

A Few Reasons Why Giving Our Personal Books to an ABLE Library is a Good Idea

1.) Books in a public place such as our ABE site will more likely be read by at least one more person than the same books stored, stuffed, or housed somewhere in our homes.

2.) We will still have access to our donations, and we are more likely to suggest a book to a colleague or a student if that book is within easy reach.

3.) We have the choice either to donate our books permanently to our ABLE Library or to place them here on temporary loan.

4.) If we want to donate them, actually give them forever to our ABLE Library, we have the option of offering them up via a non-cash charitable contribution as a very legitimate IRS itemized deduction. One of us, a beyond-hope biblioholic, has done this for a few years. See the IRS guidelines in our manual for more particulars on recent IRS provisions. Just remember that you can't take them back after you have made this decision to donate your books to your non-profit ABE programs. The paperwork isn't really very complicated, especially if you aren't talking about more than a $250 contribution. Even if you are, it is still a good tax-reducing opportunity. The books are being used, and you might reduce your tax payment by a few dollars.

5.) When we give because we really want to see others benefit, we are investing in the present and future learning and personal growth of our students and we are helping to make our local programs more inviting. A goodwill offering can go far beyond the ten cents or ten dollars we have paid for a book in terms of its value to our students and to our programs' collective image in the community. It's just another aspect of good public relations.

6.) Without making specific references to a good book many of us know and own, quiet behind-the-scenes giving has its own rewards. We'll feel better for having given good books to our local ABE sites. If we have really read them, they'll always be a part of us even though we no longer physically own them.

Other Low-Cost Acquisition Methods

Book Exchanges

Do you know if there are paperback/book exchange businesses in your area? For years we have been visiting two such businesses in the York area, but only in the last few years have we shopped there for books to put into our Storytelling/ABLE Library. The Paperback Trade is located just north of York on Route 30 in the Maple Village Plaza No. 2 strip mall. It is a large supermarket-sized single room containing thousands of used paperbacks in row after row of easy-to-reach person-high shelving in the middle and ceiling-high shelving around the walls. It is a book lover's dream come true! If you have any paperbacks(in good condition, please!) to exchange, take them to the counter as soon as you come in. A friendly staff member will go through your pile of paperbacks and tell you what they will accept. You will then receive a credit slip for one-fourth(25%) of the cover price total of your books. Don't expect to receive any money. After you have browsed through the very large collection at The Paperback Trade, you will probably have found some books you want to acquire. Take them to the counter. A store employee will charge you one-half(50%) of the total cover price of the books you buy. If you have a credit slip for that amount or more, you don't have to pay a cent in cash for your "purchase." If you have no credit, they will be happy to take your money. We have been book shopping or swapping at this store many times. We have always received polite and fair treatment. We have often left feeling a little guilty about the good reading we have carried home at low on no actual cash cost.

The other similar business in our area is The Recycled Reader. This store is located off Kenneth & Loucks Rd., one-quarter mile east of the West Manchester Mall, and just a few miles away from The Paperback Trade. Both stores are open six days a week, have limited evening hours, and are closed on Sundays. The Recycled Reader is much smaller than The Paperback Trade, but it still advertises that it has 30,000 books. It gives 30% credit for new releases and also advertises that it offers best seller rentals. Both stores have organized and categorized their stock for relatively easy search and seize missions. The credit and purchase arrangements(50% of cover price)are very similar at both stores.

Both stores have an amazing variety of fiction and nonfiction paperbacks. Even if you have no credit going in, you probably won't feel too much financial drain going out. The key is to shop around and take your time. On several occasions we have found multiple editions of the book we wanted and have walked away with an older and much cheaper book which was in better condition than the newer, more expensive editions. Because these stores are book trade or exchange businesses, there is a constant change in the stock. If you can't find a specific book or favorite author on one visit, it might be there the next time. We suspect that many of our fellow ABE practitoners are book lovers who won't mind acquiring a used book or two. We know our students don't mind. New books are nice, but most ABE budgets don't allow for large general-reading purchases. We consider ourselves lucky to have money for regular ABE/GED/ESL texts and workbooks. Go to your local book exchange and start enjoying the low-cost additions to your personal and ABE site libraries.

Local Used Book Stores

We have also been shopping at area used book stores for the past couple years. We were delighted to discover that there are three such stores within one block of one another on West Market Street in York. A search in the yellow pages will probably give you a clue or two as to whether or not there are used book stores in your area. If you find such a store, you will very likely find out about other stores in the area or even in your county or larger region. The used book people have quite an intricate network in operation, with individual book dealers and mom-and-pop operations in constant contact with one another. Prices will vary, of course, from really cheap(less than a dollar) to several times the cover price if you find a rare first-edition hardbound. We paid $35.00 for a first-edition copy of a John C. Gardner, Jr. novel(October Light) which one of us coveted and will probably not donate to our collection, but most books are for sale for a few dollars or more, rarely more than six or seven dollars. Unlike our experience with the paperback exchange stores, it is usually harder for us to find what we are looking for in these used book establishments. In the smaller places, however, the owner or employee on duty will be quite willing to assist us if we have a particular author or topic in mind. In all of these stores cash is the name of the exchange. Again, the key to low-cost book acquisition is in taking your time to find bargains. We have literally found treasures in trash heaps in used book stores. As they say, one person's junk is another person's gold(or something like that).

As we mentioned above, the used book dealer network is very sophisticated. From York we have traveled to Lancaster and Gettysburg in search of good books. Although we haven't ventured out of state just to shop for used books, we have learned about the existence of several large new-and-used book stores in Baltimore, Maryland. We couldn't get interstate travel for such purposes into our local or 353 budgets, but we'll find a way to get there.

Special New(well, almost) Book Sales at Temporary Sites

For the past four or five years something new and exciting to our area(York, PA)for book lovers has been the appearance of enormous book sales at temporary sites. For example, one of the first ones we can remember came to a nearby shopping mall area(old North York Mall) and set up operations in what was formerly a large department store. One corporate name that we recall was Emory, but we think there are at least two such floating book sale businesses(the other being Book Warehouse)that have been coming and going. The discount prices are very attractive, usually 50% to 70% off cover prices, and the merchandise is mostly new(not used), meaning published within the last five to ten years and in good condition. Hardbound and paperbacks of all kinds and at great prices are available to the patient book shopper. The key element here is the willingness of ABE staff to look through table after table of these books. There is usually some attempt at organizing the thousands of books that are trucked in by one or more big rigs. Childrens' books are normally more expensive and placed in one section of the cavern-like interiors where these book sales are normally established. There is usually a table or two of hundreds of college texts and other kinds of educational non-fiction resources such as dual-language dictionaries in English and several other tongues. There is often a table or two of art and music books and a section of self-help books for adults.

When you enter one of these stores, we suggest that you look for a basket or shopping cart. Read all of the signs regarding how the books are priced and marked so you won't be surprised when you line up to pay for your finds at the one or two cash registers that have

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been set up to keep things organized. Because we have gone back to these temporary book store operations many times during the month or so that they usually stay in one place, we have discovered that the discounts can go as high as 90% on many items. Of course, if you find a book you really want to own or purchase for your ABE site, it is risky to wait for that book's price to be reduced. It might not be there next time. We have spent hours and hours at these mobile book sales, and we have acquired hundreds of dollars worth of good books and related materials(calendars, software, etc.), maybe two thousand dollars in value is a better estimate of what we have bought and shared for one or two hundred dollars total in the last four years. These books have been well worth the hours it took to find them.

We heard about the first such book sale because one our staff told us there was a large sign hanging over the entrance to what used to be a fairly popular discount department store. A few days later we received a letter fro.m the book sale company which invited us to visit and offered us $25.00 worth of free books for our school(adult education program). We are pleased to report that they were polite to us and fully honored that offer. We felt guilty walking away with the loot. The problem with such book sales, of course, is that they come and go. We chanced upon a site near Lancaster where a similar operation has come and gone twice in the last two years. Our advice is to take advantage of such opportunities while you can. We have also purchased several books as gifts for friends and relatives. They'll never know unless you tell them that the fifty-dollar book you gave them cost you just five dollars. Again, as we have stressed above, our ABE students and colleagues feel good about the bookshelves at The Learning Place which have many new as well as used books for all to use. The temporary book sales are very interesting and often quite profitable experiences. We have even encountered some of our ABE students there. What a pleasure!

Large New-Book Stores(Discount or Potluck)

A year or two ago, to book lovers especially, a very welcome addition to the greater Park City shopping area near Lancaster, PA came in the form of a very large and extremely inviting super-book store under the corporate name of Borders Book Shop. Borders is one of the classiest book stores that we have ever browsed. Most of the books are expensive, that is, sold at cover prices, but this interesting place has some good bargains too. There are so many attractive features about Borders that we'll just mention a few. The store is nicely decorated and designed. There are chairs and a few couches available at different locations for the book lover to check out the goods. There is a separate area for children's books of all kinds which has toys and a play area for little pre-readers. A coffee and pastry shop sits off to the right of the main entrance. There are tables and chairs for customers who want to relax over tea or coffee and enjoy the highly literate atmosphere. The organization and display of the thousands of new books, paperback and hardbound, is superior to any other store we have ever visited - and we have been to bookshops and stores in major cities. If you can't find what you are looking for at Borders, good luck to you. Of course, if it's in print, they'll be happy to order it for you. The place is really a treat to visit. And sometimes you will find a true bargain, maybe outside on the discount tables or around the corner from the large check-out (multiple cash register operation!)area. The place just oozes with the excitement of good stories, intellectual growth, and new information on just about every professional, personal, or avocational/recreational interest you might have. It's a special place for those of us fortunate enough to have a means of transportation, a few dollars to spend on quality books, and a love of literature, life, and learning.

We don't want to ignore other book stores such as The Provident Bookstores, the Waldenbooks stores, the Book Warehouse stores, the Bookland stores, B. Dalton Bookseller, and the Encore stores. There are also many specialty stores such as New Age and Christian-based book stores. There are usually bargain tables or displays at these stores. We have certainly found some good buys for personal and professional use. **Don't forget the Yellow Pages of your local phone book. Look under "Book Dealers-Retail" and "Book Dealers-Used and Rare".**

Discount Books by Direct-Mail Ordering

We suggest that ABE staff who are interested in acquiring quality books at discount prices get on a direct-mail book company list. We will use Daedalus Books as our example because we have had good responses - and good deals - from them both before and during our current 1993-94 353 program year. All of the information you will need to get on the Daedalus mailing list and to place an order with them is on the section below from a recent catalog.* We have placed personal orders by phone and by mail, and we have placed ABE program and 353 orders by mail through our organization's standard requisition and purchase order procedures. The friendly people at Daedalus have always given us prompt and accurate service. Included also below are some of their clever and very useful blurbs. We can say happily that the blurbs did not lead us to purchase books which turned out to be inappropriate or about topics other than we expected. Many of the books available through Daedalus at signifcant savings relate to the five GED subject areas and to many career and personal growth concerns of our ABE students. Again, we'll let the blurbs speak for themselves(see manual for blurb sample).

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* As noted, please look for such information in the actual manual.

Other Discount Stores and Clubs Which Sell Books

We don't want to forget stores such as Ollie's Bargain Store and Sam's Club. Ollie's stores are fascinating places to visit. They advertise "Good Stuff Cheap" and have a big sign hanging near the checkout area which tells us customers that their credit manager is Helen Waite. If we have a problem with paying cash for their merchandise, we are advised to go to Helen Waite. One of us pondered the sign for a few moments before asking his wife to explain the true identity or purpose of Helen Waite. Then he chuckled and chuckled some more. He had finally understood the humor. If you aren't laughing at this true story, please read it over again.

We have found some great book bargains at Ollie's. One of our treasured ABLE Storytelling Library bargains is a hardbound copy of Artic Dreams: Imagination and Desire in a Northern Landscape, a long work of highly detailed and enlightening nonfiction by Barry Lopez. We'll return to this wonderful book later in this manual. It cost us a few dollars at Ollie's. The retail or cover price was $22.95. We have used this book for GED and brush-up student reading and sharing. We have found other similar ABLE-connected bargains at Ollie's.

Sam's Club is probably not a new resource for many of our readers, but we mention it because sometimes we do find a recent or current bestseller, new and hardbound, there at a reasonable discount price. For the most part, however, 20-to-40% discounts are not what we mean when we talk about low-cost library acquisitions. We really mean "Good Stuff Cheap."

Garage Sales, Yard Sales, and Fetes

One final source of low-cost ABLE Storytelling Library books is that fairly recent free enterprise and often institutional fund-raising phenomenon known as the garage/yard sale or fete. The York Hospital holds a used book sale every spring at its annual fete at the

York Fairgrounds. The fete is a very big event which closely rivals the famous York Fair itself which is held in early-mid September. The large inside area under the York Fair Grandstand is the site for the York Hospital Fete's extremely large book sale. For three days book lovers converge underneath the Grandstand to sort through the thousands of used paperbacks and hardbound books that are arranged into several often helpful categories. The fete volunteers do a good job of organizing the books into such collections as children's books, young adult, novels, self-help, psychology/sociology, and literary classics. The prices range from ten cents to a few dollars for most of the books. There is even a rare and/or collectible book area where used but more expensive books can be purchased. While we were looking for book bargains near the end of this three-day event, we heard the p.a. system announcement that most of the used books could be purchased at $1.00 per yard. We couldn't believe it, but they meant what they said. We paid a dollar for our one-foot pile of books. We could have lugged out many more for our dollar, but our car was parked too far away for us to drag a yard(a stack three feet high)of books away from the York Hospital Fete. Again, as we have stressed often in this chapter or unit, be prepared to take your time in searching for good books for your personal and ABLE Library collections. The great finds and bargains are there, especially if you get there early and can beat the crowds. It's very refreshing to see that there really are many, many people, children and adults, out there who like to read. What else could they be doing with all those books?

Smaller events such as family yard sales or local church fetes are also a source of good and low-cost library acquisitions. Every year one of our local churches has a big yard sale which includes a few tables of books. We can't think of a year when we didn't buy at least one good book at fifty cents or less at the Yorkshire U.M.'s Annual Fete. Also applicable here, as we noted in more detail above, is the chance to contribute to a worthy social cause, local charity project, or outreach mission by buying some books at very low prices.

Some Thoughts on Selection and Quality of ABLE Library Acquisitions

It's very simple, really, when we work hard to say in a brief statement just what we mean by "good stuff" or quality books. We have been asking ourselves what we personally like to read, what we are interested in reading about and in learning more about. Then we have been thinking about the interests, needs, and concerns of our spouses, our children, our parents, our friends, and our ABLE students. Might we or might any of the others purchase or want to purchase a particular book? How might the book help or entertain or enlighten or teach or inspire or encourage those near and/or dear to us? Can we imagine a possible reader for or use for the book we are looking at? Is the book in fairly good condition? Does it have a cover? If not, can we easily repair the flaws or put some kind of inexpensive cover on it? Would we want the book on one of our bookshelves at home? Even at a dollar or less for a book, we want to think it will be read by at least two people if we buy it. If we can justify our purchase according to the questions we have just summarized above, then we feel that we have acquired a good potential addition to our ABLE Storytelling Library.

Here is a very short account of how we bought a book we have decided to categorize under the GED science and/or personal hobby sign. Because we have been watching Home Shopping Club for a few years and have been buying rings and other kinds of jewelry as gifts for our ABE colleagues and one of our spouses, we have been learning a lot about gemstones, precious and semi-precious. An elderly gentleman visited us a year ago and gave us a big trunkload of recent National Geographic magazines. The October 1991 issue has a super feature article, "Rubies and Sapphires." After we found and shared the article with other staff members here at The Learning Place, we decided to go through the other National Geographic magazines in search of

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other articles we could make available to our students under the five broad GED subject categories. The article on rubies and sappires could be placed under GED Science. What we concluded, after a few hours of sorting through and skimming through dozens of these great books(magazines), was that such a GED-curriculum support project was a great idea, but far too time consuming for this particular academic year. Maybe in another year, with or without any funding, we might go deeper into this low-cost ABLE library development idea.

A few months later, when our terrible winter of 1994 was finally ending, we drove over to Borders, a place we have described above, while we were on a shopping expedition to Lancaster's Park City area. Just inside the main entrance alcove, on a bargain book table, we found a paperback entitled, Start Collecting Rocks and Minerals, a nonfiction and personal hobby-type book by geologist LeeAnn Srogi. It also has a little sample package of magnetite, slate, rose quartz, pumice, and banded sandstone attached to the front cover. We couldn't resist buying it when we read the pre-title-page statement, "Every rock tells a story from the earth's past. This book will show you how to read rocks and unlock their secrets." When we read more of the book back at The Learning Place, we smiled at one another when we noted Srogi's comment at the beginning of Chapter 11, "Scientists love to argue. If you show a rock to ten geologists, they'll tell you ten different stories about how it formed(p. 100)." So now we have a few books on rocks and minerals that more than two of us have enjoyed. The next ring or other piece of jewelry one of us acquires which contains some kind of gemstone will probably lead to another trip to our ABLE Storytellling Library. It's fun to learn, and what one of us, student or staff, is learning could very well be of use to us on the job or in the family or community.

Library Development and Project Objectives(cont.)

Under the heading, "A Few Ways to Get our ABLE Students and Colleagues to Use the Library," we offer some advice based on our project experiences in 1993-94. Please consult pp. 37-41 of our manual.

Chapter 2: Objectives d., e., & f.

"d.) Develop a curriculum approach to enhance ABE practitioners' use of these easy-loan books and materials along with their use of pre-GED and GED books. This approach will feature illustrations, written by ABE teachers and their students, of Adult Literacy Education as Story-telling. These illustrations will be designed and formatted to show teachers and students responding to an in-depth approach to student reading and writing in a variety of ABE settings."

The ABLE Storytelling Manual provides many examples of how the project team interpreted Kazemek's storytelling metaphor in ABE settings. For example, here are some excerpts from Chapter 5, "Prose-Poem Essays as Storytelling Opportunities(Manual, pp. 49-60)."

Prose-Poem Essays as Storytelling Opportunities

"A few years ago we wrote some pieces which seemed to be part poetry and part essay. They looked like essays. They had titles, they were frequently in multi-paragraph form, and they were usually descriptive in flavor and personal in tone. They often read like poems because they seemed to focus on short periods of time and sometimes conveyed more emotion and enthusiasm than regular expository prose essays, especially student drafts of GED practice essays. We called these short compositions prose poems then, but we have since changed the name of this very focussed kind of written storytelling to prose-poem essays because the narrative aspect fits the essay structure of real-world or work-world reader expectations. Readers expect the writer to tell a story, usually a remembered personal experience which took place over a short time span. For example, the writer might describe how he witnessed a beautiful sunset or watched a baby colt being born. Readers also expect the prose-poem essay to make a point or to be a bit philosophical at the end. Prose-poem essays have always been written, but they have been called other things and have rarely been collected or published in book form as a separate genre. As adult educators who have written and shared our own prose-poem efforts with our ABE students, we are champions of this essay type. We urge our fellow ABE practitioners to become familiar with this mainly non-fiction essay genre.

We first encountered the form in a little book, Stories and Prose Poems, which Nobel Prize winner Alexander Solzhenitsyn wrote and which Michael Glenny translated from Russian to English. This work was first published in 1971 during the time Solzhenitsyn was just starting to get a large international readership. The story or prose poem which follows is very representative of the other fifteen or so short works of its kind from this important but not very well-known little book.

"Freedom to Breathe"

A shower fell in the night and now dark clouds drift across the sky, occasionally sprinkling a fine film of rain.

I stand under an apple tree in blossom and I breathe. Not only the apple tree but the grass round it glistens with moisture; words cannot describe the sweet fragrance that pervades the air. I inhale as deeply as I can, and the aroma invades my whole being; I breathe with my eyes open, I breathe with my eyes closed - I cannot say which gives me the greater pleasure.

This, I believe, is the single most precious freedom that prison takes away from us: the freedom to breathe freely, as I now can. No food on earth, no wine, not even a woman's kiss is sweeter to me than this air steeped in the fragrance of flowers, of moisture and freshness.

Prose-Poem Essays(cont.)

No matter that this is only a tiny garden, hemmed in by five-story houses like cages in a zoo. I cease to hear the motorcycles backfiring, radios whining, the burble of loudspeakers. As long as there is fresh air to breathe under an apple tree after a shower, we may survive a little longer(Solzhenitsyn, p. 197).

This sample prose-poem essay, by the author of such works as The First Circle, Cancer Ward, and One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich, is very suitable for sharing with ABE students for several reasons. Most adult readers can appreciate having "the freedom to breathe freely." They can understand why someone might want to write, to tell a short autobiographical story, about such a meaningful moment. Most of us adult readers have experienced some kind of imprisonment of the body and/or the soul, and most of us can sense the author's joy in such a simple and brief association with one of life's priceless kinds of individual victory. We readers will probably think about Solzhenitsyn's celebration of freedom and maybe be more receptive to the next similar experience we have. We are not as likely to miss just how free but invaluable such remembered moments can be as we might have been had we never read or listened to this beautiful prose-poem essay.

Another reason why this piece connects to what we do as ABE teachers and students grows out of our mutual need to get to know more about and to feel more comfortable with one another. The reading of published prose poems or prose-poem essays and the writing and sharing of staff and student pieces is an enjoyable process which can be a source of good information about how the authors look at life and learning. Because the prose-poem essays, as are all of the other storytelling forms in our program, are the result of volunteer participation in whole-language ABE activities, any comments on prose poems such as Solzhenitsyn's will contribute to a developing sense of what this form can be. Student and staff reactions to shared prose poems give each participant bits and pieces of understanding about others know and feel about the topics and stories. As each storytelling participant picks up more information about the inner lives(thoughts and concerns)of her fellow and less-secret sharers, she begins to feel better about being part of a community of whole-language users. There are stories within stories here about both students and staff feeling better about themselves because they dared or cared to share. The prose-poem essay activity, which should extend at least over a few days, is a low-anxiety, high-yield form of storytelling.

A final reason for sharing "Freedom to Breathe" or similar published prose-poem essays in ABE settings is the GED-essay connection. It's a natural progression for students and staff to write in personal journals or writing notebooks and then to work on short autobiographical pieces such as prose-poem essays. The prose-poem essay above is how long? It is just about on the bull's-eye in terms of the average length of the GED essays that many students will be preparing to write as part of the Writing Skills Test. The 200-word length of the sample prose-poem essay, which has a short introductory paragraph(sometimes just a sentence or two), a couple main or body paragraphs, and a short summary paragraph, doesn't seem like a hard kind of writing to produce after the sharing exercises. Many student prose-poem essays are in the two-to-three-hundred-word range. With students feeling more confident about filling a blank page or even several blank pages with their own ideas and experiences, they aren't likely to feel intimidated by the 200-word challenge of the GED essay. And they know they can use the first-person pronoun(I); it's acceptable, often even preferable, for them to write about their experiences if they can work a few examples into their GED essays. GED essay readers generally give a point or two higher to essays which show or illustrate in addition to the basic statement or telling of personal opinions and positions. The writing of prose-poem essays, as extensively demonstrated in this chapter, can enhance both the competence and the confidence of our ABE student writers."

Discussion of Objective on Curriculum Approach(cont.)

The prose-poem essay is illustrated by adult student examples. On pp. 59 and 60 of our manual we explain that this kind of writing meets Kazemek's criteria for what happens when people tell stories.

Chapter 6, "Ghost Stories in ABE/GED Studies?: The Ghosts of Gettysburg(pp. 61-64)," is another direct example of how to connect storytelling to and use storytelling in ABE/GED social studies/history lessons or discussions. Chapter 10, "During and After Storytelling: A General Renewal of Enthusiasm(pp. 104-110)," contains still more examples of how storytelling can enrich ABE/GED instruction and motivate both staff and students.

Objective on Evaluation(e.): "Collect data to show if such an approach might lead to better student reading and writing performance on GED practice tests, to better student attendance patterns, and to improved levels of self-worth as measured by a comparison of entry and exit written assessments by students."

We will discuss our general evaluation of the project in the next chapter. For now, we simply state that we feel good about what happened at The Learning Place during our Storytelling Year, 1993-94.

Manual Objective(f.): "Develop an easy-to-use 'product' similar to the Write-Now Manual for GED Instructors which interested ABE practitioners can borrow and/or copy through statewide(resource-assistance) programs such as AdvancE."

The ABLE Storytelling Manual is our project's product. We are pleased with the way it turned out. We maintain our conviction that ABE practitioners who are really interested in exploring and interpeting Kazemek's storytelling metaphor for ABLE applications will want to have the theory, the original essay, our explanations of what we did, and the many illustrations of whole-language activities in ABE settings that we put into our manual.

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Chapter 3: Project Evaluation(With Conclusions and Suggestions)

On pp. 110 and 111 of our ABLE Storytelling Manual we comment on our interpretation of Kazemek's Tenth Principle of his "General Principles of Holistic(Whole) Language Education." We believe that we cannot properly evaluate our 1993-94 Storytelling Project unless we use an holistically determined project evaluation process. We declare with great vigor to anyone interested that we know our storytelling year was a good one. There were lots of positives about what we and our students did on a volunteer basis in 1993-94. Story Circles were established, stories were told and read, and many of the students, and yes, even a few of the ABE staff wrote fiction and nonfiction pieces and shared them during storytelling sessions.

The best evidence we have that our storytelling activities were successful is in the on-going sharing. As this report was being completed, students and staff were not concerned about the official end of the 353 funding year. They knew that the storytelling opportunities were still in place and that funding was not a concern. The work of the project will go on because we have our little storytelling library, primarily an open-entry, open-exit student flow to keep new blood (and stories) coming through, and the enthusiastic support of our non-353-funded ABE colleagues. We feel good about the sharing we've done because we know our students have come, have told their stories, and have enjoyed the whole experience.

Background Explanation of Evaluation Setting

We present part of pp. 80-81 of our manual's Chapter 8, " Reading and Writing About Ourselves and Others," because it provides support for our holistic assessment approach.

"Students don't always come to our programs for ABE/GED or brush-up work in reading and writing. Many of our students in 1993-94 - and we served well over 300 - came to us for remediation studies in math. When they tested out at the goals/grade levels set by our funding agencies, they usually moved on to the next steps in their employment and training plans. This program year was a record-breaking year for such math brush-up referrals to I.U. 12's The Learning Place. We estimate, based on our attendance and achievement statistics through May, that as many as 30% of our ABE participants were sent here just for math basic skills remediation and brush-up studies. Most of these students had their high school diplomas or GED's; they just needed to bring up their math scores prior to admission to college, business and technical schools, or other kinds of post-secondary education and training.

We share the above information with our fellow ABE practitioners because we want you to see that our storytelling vision is not always shared passionately or embraced totally by all of the agencies which fund us and send prospective students to us. It's not that these agencies have a problem with Kazemek's metaphor of Adult Basic and Literacy Education as Storytelling; it's just that they and the students they refer to us are thinking about short-term periods of study with us. They want to bring up their general reading or math scores to 7.0 or 9.0(TABE) and get on with whatever is next on their Individual Service Strategy (ISS). It is our job to include all of these brush-up students in our larger program, especially in the course of making them feel welcome here and letting them know that they can spend some of their study time here thinking about who they are, what they really want to do with their lives, and how they might keep their long-term dreams alive. We invite these brush-up (BU) students to participate in all of our storytelling activities. The good news is that some of these BU participants, and they make up over 44% of our total ABE number, do join us on a voluntary basis."

An Analysis of Data Collected from Student and Attendance Records in 1993-94

The two pages below are a sample of student data(attendance and academic progress) that we collected during 1993-94. All of the students listed are from the project volunteer group. Each ABE student participated in at least one storytelling activity or phase of the project.

Project Evaluation(cont.)

Storytelling Volunteers, 1993-94(esp. Jan. to June):

A., Kristina = 5/2/94 - CO as G-BU(recently earned GED!)

C., Cynthia = 5/18/93 - CO as G-gen. BU

C., Delvis = 1/24/94 - CO as G/P -ABE/GED, 7/11/94 Term. as ABE I+ in Rdg., ABE II+(M)

de J., Alma = 1/24/94 - CO as E-ABE/GED

D., Dana = 5/2/94 - 5/26/94, Term. as BU Pos.

E., Jacqueline = 5/2/94 - 6/29/94, Term. as BU Pos.

F., Tynet = 1/25/94 - CO as G-ABE/GED

G., Lisa = 3/7/94 - CO as -BU, Term. 7/11/94 Term. as BU Pos. at ABE II Level

H., Charlotte = 1/24/94 - CO as G/P- , Term. on 7/15/94 as ABE II+ in Rdg., ABE II(M)

H., Erica = 1/24/94 - CO as F-ABE/GED

H., Michelle = 3/7/94 - 5/20/94, Term. as BU Pos. in Rdg. , Math as BU+ at ABE II+,

+ FT Job!(rated G = Good)

H., Christal = 1/10/94 - 4/5/94, Term. as ABE II Pos.

J., Amina = 1/24/94 - CO as P-ABE/GED, Term. on 7/5/94 as ABE II+ in Rdg., ABE II(M)

J., Mary = 1/15/93 - CO as G-ABE/GED

J., Mia = 3/7/94 - CO as G/E, prev. unoffic. term. as BU Pos.

J., Vonn = 1/24/94 - 4/18/94, Term. as ABE II Pos. in R & M!

K., David = 10/18/93 - 2/28/94, Term. as ABE I Pos.

K., Wanda = 4/29/92 - CO as E-BU(already gen. BU Pos.)

M., Ericka = 5/2/94 - 6/9/94, Term. as BU Positive

M., Tawanda = 1/24/94 - 5/26/94, Term. as BU(R & M) Pos., GED T-R

M., Trina = 5/2/94 - CO as G-ABE/GED

Project Evaluation(cont.)

N., Karen = 3/7/94 - CO as G-ABE/GED

S., Chrystal = 5/2/94 - 6/8/94, Term. as BU Pos.

S., Angelina = 9/9/93 - CO as F-ABE/GED

S., Candace = 3/7/94 - 5/4/94, Term. as BU Pos.

T., Keya = 5/2/94 - 6/6/94, Term. as BU Pos.

V., Milagros = 11/2/93 - 3/14/94, ABE Term. as ABE I+ in Rdg., ABE II+ in Math

W., Marcella = 1/10/94 - CO as G-Rec. GED!

Students volunteered to participate in one or more of the roles listed below.

Nature of Volunteer Participation =

1. Story Circle listener
2. Story Circle reader
3. Story Circle writer and reader
4. Story Circle talker
5. Story writer
6. Story reader
7. Other reader
8. Other writer
9. Self-Esteem-connection volunteer.

Significant Finding One:

A sampling of terminated ABE students who were not active in the project shows that they were active ABE participants for slightly over one month and that they demonstrated an average academic pre-post growth of just over three(3) grade levels. The project volunteers participated in their ABE studies for an average period of well over three(3) months, and they did as well academically as the non-project(control) group. It is important to note that most of the project volunteers started at a lower academic level. Their brush-up and ABE/GED/ESL study needs were greater than the typical non-project participant's as we explained above. We conclude that the storytelling factor is clearly a part of the significantly greater average time of program participation. We believe that storytelling activities help to retain students.

Significant Finding Two:

Because most of our project volunteers entered our ABE programs as either Brush-Up(BU) or as ABE I or ABE II(Pre-GED) students, we were not able to come up with any strong validations of our hypothesis that project participants would do better on their GED Writing Skills and Literature and the Arts(Tests 1 and 4) tests than would non-project participants. We did find that their (project volunteers) Writing Skills practice test scores did improve because they scored one or two points higher on their "post-test" practice essays than they did on their "pre-test" essays or writing samples. As to any project effects in terms of our Literature and the Arts practice test data, it is very clear that participation in storytelling activities didn't show any negative influence. Practice test scores came up a few points on the average from pre-to-post testing, but we certainly can't claim this improvement was statistically significant. We know our project volunteers had a good attitude toward stories and literature in general, but attitude isn't something we can measure with standard ABE/GED tests.

Significant Finding Three:

Project participants did more writing and read much more in non-text books than did non-participants. As we have already stated, we know that storytelling activities are a positive retention factor. It is also our belief that participation in storytelling activities is an important ABE student motivation factor. Project participants probably had more to write about, and they also had a group of willing readers and listeners in their Story Circles. This fact is very important in programs where long-term improvement in student writing skills is an instructional objective. Writers need readers, and tellers need listeners. The files of project participants are thicker than the files of non-participants because our project volunteers did more writing, definitely in class and probably out of class as well.

A Summary of our Holistic Storytelling Evaluation

Over the course of the project year we developed our storytelling approaches, or they were developed because of the interests and ideas expressed by particular students who were always participating on a voluntary basis. The most successful storytelling activity, we feel, was the Story Circle time when our ABE students could leave their individual work for a while and move into a more communicative space, facing each other and being together as a group around a center. This arrangement was in clear contrast to their daily or regular study routine.

Toward the end of the project year we felt that students participated in Story Circle activities not only to get their hours in or to get their scores up and go for the GED or Brush-Up testing, but also because they enjoyed the Story Circle as a time when new ideas grew out of stories and as a place where different worlds opened up for them to experience.

Having students read aloud their own stories was inspiring to staff and fellow students. It was very encouraging, all could see and feel, when students put their own thoughts into writing and received the positive kind of attention possible in a Story Circle. We believe students' involvement in Story Circles contributed to an increase in their self-esteem in the area of academic thoughts and expression. It encouraged the kind of expression of thinking and feelings in areas of life that were not necessarily in day-to-day conversations, and it contributed to a broadening of educational horizons.

The success we claim for this project is very hard to measure in any sort of tests-andmeasurements way. Students were inspired to read more and browse more in the storytelling library we set up. Being introduced to the short stories of a particular author often stimulated the interest of students in reading more of that author's work on their own time. Not all of the students who wrote stories because they were willing to try it out(volunteer to do so) became "writers" or demonstrated major improvements in their writing skills, but some embraced the task and made writing stories about their lives a part of their everyday routine. Here we could observe almost incredible improvements in their ability to express ideas and in their vocabulary, spellling, and sentence structure. The language in successive stories bloomed more. Some other students for whom writing was not an easy task found it easier if they told a story first and were encouraged to write it down afterward. As the project year went on, even students who were reluctant to write about their lives showed more interest as they heard other students read their stories to the group. For some the readings took away the fear, the embarrassment or other feelings that were geting in the way when any kind of writing needed to be done.

For the storytelling approach to make a bigger and more measurable impact on the students' academic growth, we suggest that storytelling projects be a part of almost every day's routine. Dedicating time to this whole language approach is more than worth our while if ABE is to have a positive effect in our society in which illiteracy, single parenthood, and welfare dependency are all too common. Recently a popular weekly news magazine contained an article on the rise in crime and its effects on children. The article discussed how storytelling can be used to help young children who are growing up in heavy-crime neighborhoods. The children can talk about their feelings and express the horrors that they could not otherwise share. Storytelling can help people share, learn, heal, and grow.

Project Evaluation(cont.)

Students were frequently asked to tell us how they felt about the various storytelling activities that we, students and staff, explored together during the 1993-94 project year. Here are a few of their evaluative comments.

Reactions to Story Circle/Storytelling:

"I like storytelling because it encourages me to read more and it lets my mind explore the stories when I am listening carefully. Storytelling lets the mind meditate on the story."

Mary J.

"I really enjoy story time because I have learned that stories are not just for kids. Children's stories have a way of making us adults think different ways. After the story we get together and talk about a thought or a view. And I like the way we meet our fellow students and their teachers."

Cynthia C.

"I enjoyed story time. You gave us the opportunity to relax and let our minds wonder to many different atmospheres, from children's stories to very interesting fairy tales.

Alma De J.

"Story time is a time of excitement. It gives you a chance to listen and take in what you have read. It could be a time to cry or to laugh depending on the story. It is a blessing to have a story read to me because I'm used to reading stories to me kids.

When stories are being read, it makes me feel special. It gives me a real assurance to know that I'm thought about every day. Oh, no, I don't take this for granted! I'm glad I was a part of story time. It was an encouragement to me."

Wanda K.

* * * * *

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Some Final Thoughts and Suggestions

1.) Student and staff oral and written evaluations of project activites were very positive.

2.) The project directors/coordinators feel that storytelling activities should be a regular part of ABE/GED/advanced ESL programs. They suggest at least two storytelling activities a week in full-time programs.

3.) Although storytelling activities are very suitable for part-time ABE/GED programs(see Chapter 10, pp. 104-110 of Manual), they are even more appropriate in full-time ABE/GED/ESL programs, especially those that are open-entry, open-exit programs.

4.) Storytelling(whole language) activities help promote student and staff self-esteem, and they appear to be a significant factor in improving student retention in ABE programs.

5.) In individualized ABE/GED programs, storytelling activities give students and staff some time to come together for sharing and learning in a story circle or volunteer group setting.

6.) The co-directors emphasize that the Manual is our interpretation of how Francis Kazemek's storytelling metaphor might be applied to ABE practice. They urge interested ABE/GED instructors and program administrators to use the Manual as a starting point for enrichment or improvement of their instructional delivery programs.

7.) Further research, which the co-directors hope to conduct in the next year or two, might provide data to demonstrate that a storytelling approach to ABE can also make a significant difference in academic achievement on standardized tests such as the TABE and the official GED practice tests.

8.) The establishment of a non-text storytelling library such as the one developed on site at The Learning Place can be a worthwhile addition to ABE and career or personal growth curriculum support.

9.) This 1993-94 curriculum development effort could lead to other beneficial 353 projects.

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Appendix: Condensed Resumes of Project Coordinators

George E. Rutledge:

George is an ABE practitioner and ABE program coordinator for the Lincoln Intermediate Unit (I.U. No. 12). He works out of The Learning Place, the I.U.'s multi-program ABE site in York, Pennsylvania. During his fifteen years with the Lincoln Intermediate Unit he has served as coordinator of the Lincoln I.U./Penn State(Capitol Campus) Writing Project(1980-93), as director/coordinator of several 353 projects(1983-94) such as Finding the WRITE Time: ABE GED, and ESL Practitioners as Teacher-Researchers(98-8012) , as an ABE conference and workshop presenter at local, state, regional, and national ABE and related events, as Vice-President for Intermediate Units of the PA Council of Teachers of English(1983-89), as a Fellow of the US/UK British-American Exchange on Adult Literacy(1988-89), as a member of the PA Adult Education State Plan Task Force(1987-92), and as a member of LEARN, Inc.'s(York County's adult literacy program coalition)board of directors(1988-present). He is also an adjunct intructor of English at Millersville University(PA) and at Penn State University's York Campus. For fifteen years prior to his career with I.U 12, George served as a high school teacher, English department chairperson, drama director, and coach of high school speech and debate activities. He is a native of York, PA, and a graduate of Ursinus College(PA) and Kutztown University(PA). He holds degrees in psychology and English education, in addition to supervisory certification in the communication arts(PDE-PA).

Rauthild Orleth-Diener:

In 1993-94 Rauthild served the Lincoln Intermediate Unit as co-director of its 353 project, "Adult Basic and Literacy Education as Storytelling: A Reading/Writing Project." She also worked as a part-time ABE/GED instructor at The Learning Place in York, PA. In 1991-92 she designed and planned curriculum while working at the Waldorf School of the Finger Lakes in Ithaca, New York, and she attended graduate level seminars on myth and narrative theory at the anthropology department of Cornell University. During a two-year stay in Japan from 1987 to 1989, she designed and conducted an in-depth interview study on the life history of ten Japanese women from diverse social and professional backgrounds. This work led to the foundation of several ongoing women's self-help groups. In 1985-86 she conducted field research among the Ifugao ethnic group of the Cordillera Region of Luzon, Philippines. That research consisted of collecting, translating, and analyzing Ifugao oral traditions, dreams, and dream interpretations. From 1981 to 1985 Rauthild collaborated with a Jungian psychoanalyst in organizing and leading seminars and workshops on the approach of Jungian depth psychology to dream and folklore symbolism and on the nurturing effect dream work may have on daily life and personal growth. A cultural anthropologist with a minor in archaeology, Rauthild holds an M. A. and a Ph. D. from Albert-Ludwigs-Universitat in Freiburg, Germany.

Contact Information: George Rutledge will serve as project follow-up contact person. He can be reached at (717) 854-4154. His mailing address is Project A.B.E. - The Learning Place, 131 N. Duke St., York, PA 17401.

ABLE Storytelling Manual

1993/94 353 Project No. 98-4027

Adult Basic & Literacy Education as Storytelling:

A Reading/Writing Project

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Lincoln Intermediate Unit No. 12
P.O. Box 70
New Oxford, PA 17350

ABLE Storytelling Manual

A Product of

1993-94 353 Project No. 98-4027

Adult Basic & Literacy Education as Storytelling: A Reading/Writing Project

* * * * *

Lincoln Intermediate Unit. No. 12
P.O. Box 70
New Oxford, PA 17350

Grantor:
Pennsylvania Department of Education
Bureau of Adult Basic & Literacy Education
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

Grantee(s):
Henry P. Wardrop, Supervisor
Adult Basic Education - I.U. No. 12

George E. Rutledge &
Rauthild Orleth-Diener, Project
Coordinators - I.U. No. 12

353 Project No. 98-4027 in the amount of $6,199.00 to L.I.U. 12 for the period from 7/1/93 to 6/30/94.

Copies of this project's report and manual can be obtained from AdvancE at the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Resource Center or from the Western Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Resource Center.

The activity which is the subject of this project was supported in part by the U.S. Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Education or the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and no official endorsement should be inferred.

Abstract

Title: **Adult Basic and Literacy Education as Storytelling: A Reading/Writing Project**
Project No.: 98-4027 Funding: $6,199.00

Director: Henry P. Wardrop(Admin.) Phone Numbers: (717) 624-4616(Admin.)
Contact Persons/Coords.: George E. Rutledge & Rauthild Orleth-Diener(717) 854-4154(Coords.)
Address: Lincoln Intermediate Unit No. 12, P.O. Box 70, New Oxford, PA 17350

Purpose: The project was a practical application or interpretation of Francis Kazemek's metaphor of Adult Basic and Literacy Education(ABLE) as Storytelling.

Procedures: The project team designed, conducted, evaluated, and published the results of a curriculum development project which focused on ABE student reading and writing which emphasized their experiences and visions(stories) for themselves and their families.

Summary of Findings: The team collected student performance data, conducted entry and exit interviews, and reviewed students' written and oral responses to methods and materials. All indications support the continued use of or establishment of storytelling activities in ABE programs, especially in open-entry, open-exit programs.

Comments: The key physical component of this project was a collection of books related to all five GED subject areas and to adult personal and workplace concerns. The project team used low-cost acquisition strategies to develop an on-site, easy-loan library for both student and staff use. The team acquired books of poems, plays, fiction, and works of nonfiction which helped students and staff to take a more in-depth approach to student preparation for and beyond the GED tests. The project team encouraged students to read these books and share their understandings and opinions with instructors and other adult students. The team also developed a manual for ABE staff use which is not similar to existing pre-GED and GED texts. Instead, the manual presents many illustrations of how ABE students and their instructors can tell, listen to, read, write, and share stories of all kinds, fiction and nonfiction.

Product: The project team produced a curriculum manual for ABE/GED instructors who wish to support and investigate the metaphor of Adult Basic & Literacy Education as Storytelling.

Descriptors:

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Appendix: Kazemek's Essay

StoryPower Lines

We urge our readers to read Francis Kazemek's essay, " 'In Ignorance to View a Small Portion and Think That All': The False Promise of Job Literacy." We have included the complete piece because we didn't want to spend hours trying to explain in our words what we think Kazemek is saying clearly and courageously. We believe in his new vision for Adult Basic and Literacy Education. Years ago, when we started to investigate whole language practices in ABE, Frank Kazemek encouraged us to keep fighting the good fight. He has continued to lead by his practice and his writing. We will tell you more of this story in our introduction to this manual. Right now, we offer these StoryPower Lines to get the whole experimental-demonstration report process underway.

*****

"This essay is about visions of literacy and literacy education; those that see only a small portion and think it is all, and other visions that are wider, richer, and sustained by the imagination and its myriad possibilities. My purpose is to explore what literacy is for. Any vision of literacy, however narrow or expansive includes underlying beliefs about why people should know how to read and write. I argue against the current and widespread public perception of literacy and adult literacy education as primarily, if not exclusively, work-related. Such a vision is inadequate and ultimately dangerous in a democratic society (1991, p. 51)."

*****

The Genesis of this Project: An Introduction to our Manual for ABLE Storytelling

We, (and the first-person plural is the way we will write to you in much of our manual) dear reader, are friends and practitioners of Adult Basic and Literacy Education. We live and work in Pennsylvania. Because our state's Adult Basic Education(ABE) agency is now called the ABLE Bureau, we felt comfortable using the acronym ABLE as part of our project's title. ABLE means Adult Basic and Literacy Education, and that's what Francis Kazemek means when he writes about what he does and what he hopes we will do if we work with adults in basic literacy, ABE, GED, and ESL programs. ABLE makes us think of able, and that's what we hope we'll be, and you too, if we all try to take theory and metaphor and bring them to our practice of ABE. We hope we'll be able to inform you, our highly valued reader, about the ways we have been interpreting Kazemek's new vision for our profession. We also hope you will be able to use what we present here in this manual. We hope our stories and those of our very able students will prove to be worthy of Kazemek's metaphor.

In the May 1992 issue of our Adult Basic and Literacy Education Newsletter, What's the Buzz?, Daniel R. Partin, then our state's Section 353 Special Projects Adviser, expressed his enthusiasm for an article he had just read from a 1991 edition of Journal of Education. Dan's article was entitled, " Seeing the Forest Despite the Trees." After reading this very favorable review of Kazemek's article (or essay if you are into GED's Literature and the Arts), we wrote to Dan and asked him to send us a copy of the original

Kazemek piece. Dan did send the essay to us, we read it and reread it, and then we thought about how Kazemek might put his vision into practice if he were among us ABE practitioners who were willing to give it a try. We had some ideas about how Kazemek might hope to see us and our ABE students sharing and learning together through storytelling because we had been following Frank's work and visions for ABE for several years as he had been and is continuing to describe his views on ABE practice in his publications.

Dan's review inspired us to go to Kazemek once more for some staff development ideas. Kazemek's essay was and still is truly the seminal work for this 1993-94 353 project. We feel able to continue what we and our students have started without any additional funding. We are committed to going forward with our interpretation of what Kazemek feels we should be doing in our ABE programs. As ABE practitioners, we feel better about what we and our students are doing. We can tell you with much more confidence than we had a year ago that Kazemek's new vision for ABE or ABLE is worth exploring, interpreting, and putting into practice. If you read only one thing more in this manual, we hope it will be the copy of Kazemek's essay which we're pleased to have received special permission to include. We thank Dan Partin for taking the time to write about Kazemek's new vision for what we do, and we hope Francis (Frank) Kazemek's publications will become or will continue to be a part of your ABLE staff development or professional library.

There's a story here. Dan Partin read and then wrote about Kazemek's refreshing views on ABLE. We read Dan's article, devoured Kazemek's essay, and then decided to interpret his metaphor by taking some risks and spending a lot of time trying to put our interpretation into practice as whole-language activities in our local ABE setting, The Lincoln Intermediate Unit's(I.U. 12's)The Learning Place in York, Pennsylvania. We hope you, and we really mean it when we call you our 'dear reader,' will continue to build or add to this manual. As we point out in our chapter on using poetry to generate storytelling activities, most of the important things we work at building in our lives are never completely finished. We affirm the hopes and dreams of our ABE students by continuing to build on the firm foundations they and their stories have helped to construct.

Who are We?

We have already told you that we are ABLE practitioners. Two of us were on the 353 "payroll," mostly after hours and on weekends, but all of us are adult education instructors in non-353-funded programs. The two of us who wrote this manual have been advocates of storytelling activities and whole-language practices for many years, but we were not aware of each other's interests or each other's work until we met about a year ago. The "I" in most of what we write about ABE practice in this manual is the voice of George Rutledge, a veteran ABE practitioner and 353 project director. The "I" in much of the background and theory presentation which this kind of manual must contain is the voice of Rauthild Orleth-Diener, a cultural anthropologist by training and a relative newcomer to ABE. We both have a couple academic degrees we could elaborate on, but we don't want to get into that business in this manual(see project report for resume information). The "we" that made this project work includes all of our ABE colleagues and many of our ABE students here at The Learning Place. There was no separate 353-funded program. All of the participation and all of the stories were voluntary contributions by students and staff. The non-353 staff contributors are listed here because there would have been no storytelling activities without their direct involvement. We are lucky to have them as colleagues.

Project Contributors:

Carol Almeida, ABE/GED/ESL Instructor, Project A.B.E.
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Janet Rego, ABE/GED Instructor, UPI and SPOC Plus Programs
Vicki Rutledge, ABE/GED Instructor, York Adult Learning Center
Anita Smith, Office Support Specialist, The Learning Place
Ellen Tietbohl, Case Manager, SPOC Plus Program
Patricia Wallace, Case Manager, P.R.E.P. Program

George's Very Short Story

Readers who are interested in learning more about the students we work with and some of the previous experimental-demonstration and action-research projects we have conducted should consult the opening paragraphs of our manual chapters on the uses of autobiographical writing and poetry in storytelling activities. Switching to George's "I," I can tell you candidly that this project would not have been as fruitful had I remained the primary 353-funded director or coordinator. The project's story line and general development were greatly enriched by my almost-by-chance meeting with Rauthild. Her story is quite interesting, as are most stories about how people come to jobs and careers in ABE.

Rauthild's Short Story (an autobiographical selection)

My earliest encounters with folk tales can be characterized as unbearable horror. Only rarely was I able to hold up under the suspense and fears created by parents trying to rid themselves of their children in the dark woods or a beautiful girl's receiving a poisonous apple from a wicked old queen.

This early love-hate relationship, to give it a name, turned out to be a source of energy for many years of research. An exploration of the meaning of folk tales and my strong personal reactions to some of them began in 1979 under the guidance of a Jungian psychoanalyst. The seminars and lectures on the depth psychological approach to folk tales and myths which I attended and later held myself were of great influence on my studies in Cultural Anthropology at the University in Freiburg, Germany.

In 1985-86 I spent nine months with the Ifugao people in the Philippines, where I devoted my time to the collection and translation of their oral traditions, especially their magical tales.

What This Manual Is and What it Isn't

This manual is our interpretation of the kinds of ABE activities that would be in harmony with Kazemek's metaphor of adult basic and literacy education as STORYTELLING. It is a manual of explanation and demonstration. We have tried to give you, our esteemed and willing reader, plenty of theory and sufficient practice so that you can look at what you do or at what others are doing in ABE programs and then decide for yourself if you agree with Kazemek's stand and with our modest attempt to put some meat and muscle on his philosophical framework. We are talking about how we approach our jobs as ABE practitioners who are interested in giving our students opportunities to learn more about themselves and others. We want our students to do more of the acting and less of the being acted upon. We want them to have the attitudes and academic tools that will keep them moving toward their goals and dreams. We think Kazemek's new vision is saner, healthier, and more promising than the often-dominant consumerism metaphor. We agree with his view that we cannot afford to ignore the "narrative nature of human existence(p. 61)." This project's product is our ABLE Storytelling Manual, a document that is the result of what most practitioners will, we hope, see as a kind of professional growth exercise in curriculum development.

What this manual isn't is an ABE/GED/ESL curriculum guide. There are many fine and useful curriculum documents available through ABE resource libraries/clearinghouses and from several commercial publishing companies. There are curriculum guides of all kinds for ABE practitioners to adopt or adapt. What we couldn't find a few years ago was a document which showed us plenty of ABE-based applications of the storytelling metaphor. That's why we decided to develop our own manual for ourselves and maybe for interested readers like you to consider. It's not a comprehensive guide to a particular ABE curriculum. As Kazemek wrote in "Whole Language and Adult Literacy Education," and as we apply his whole language principles to our applications of his storytelling metaphor, "it is the theoretical orientation or perspective which is primary; the specific activities grow out of that(1989,

p. 4)." We hope you will read this manual and then start writing or telling your own stories about what you and your ABE students are saying, hearing, reading, and writing.

Finally, patient reader, we want to emphasize that this manual is not an attack on job-literacy, workplace-literacy, or employment-oriented ABE programs. There are many fine ABE programs across the country that are helping adults to get and keep jobs. We have no desire to enter into a "Battle of the Metaphors." Instead, we try to accentuate the positive - and that, we proclaim, there is plenty of - in Kazemek's new vision for Adult Basic and Literacy Education.

From: CAL-NCLE Notes: Vol. 3, No. 2, Winter 1993

Whole Language and Adult Literacy

In the following excerpt from NCLE's newly published book, Approaches to Adult ESL Literacy Instruction, *one of the authors, Pat Rigg, explains the concept of whole language, particularly as it applies to working with adults. For more information on the contents of this book and how to order it, see page 4.*

What does whole language mean to the people who first began applying the term to education? It is not a method, nor is it a collection of strategies, techniques, or materials. Whole language is a view of language and of teaching and learning, a philosophy of education (Edelsky, Altwerger, & Flores, 1991). The term comes not from linguists but from educators, people such as Kenneth and Yetta Goodman, Jerome Harste, and Dorothy Watson, who used it in reference to how children become readers and writers. (See Goodman, 1989 and Watson, 1989, for a history of the whole language movement.) They made a number of assertions. The first is that language is whole (hence the name) and that any attempt to fragment it into parts, whether these be grammatical patterns, vocabulary lists, or phonics "families," destroys it. Language must be kept whole or it isn't language anymore.

The second assertion is that, in a literate society, using written language is as natural as using conversation, and the uses of written language develop as naturally as do the uses of oral language (Goodman & Goodman, 1981). We become literate by building on and connecting to our developed oral language. The four language modes, speaking, writing, listening, and reading, are mutually supportive and must not be artificially separated. They should be integrated during instruction, because oral language supports reading and writing; reading exposes us to a wide variety of styles, formats, and conventions; and writing helps us understand how authors put texts together, which in turn helps us read with greater facility.

Third, all language reflects cognitive, emotional, social, and personal differences. Who and what we are is determined in great part by our language. Because we are all unique with an infinite number of different life experiences, our oral and written language often reflect those differences. This is termed "style" or "voice" in composition; it is the idiosyncratic use of language that marks what we say or write as our own.

Fourth, all language, oral and written, is social as well as personal. Although each of us is an individual, all of us are social beings, too. We develop our language in a myriad number of social contexts. We learn to speak and listen as we interact with other people, and, likewise, we learn to write and read as we connect with other writers and readers (Gaber-Katz & Watson, 1991).

These four tenets lead to related principles of teaching and learning. Primary among these is the principle that instruction must build on and connect to an individual's life and language experiences. Unless students can make the bridge between their own language and experiences and those in the texts they are attempting to read and write, they will encounter difficulty and frustration.

Participatory is the term used by some adult educators who want their classrooms to be a community of learners and who believe that student choice, student input to curriculum, and student self-evaluation are vital. Participatory teachers often cite the teachings of Paulo Freire, from whom they have learned that literacy is much more than decoding someone else's message. Literacy can be empowering and "liberating" because it gives adult students ways to understand and to alter their worlds (Freire, 1970; Freire & Macedo, 1987).

Whole language advocates assert that oral and written language experiences must be purposeful, functional, and real. Reading and writing activities in the adult literacy classroom must be for purposes of authentic communication, such as to entertain, to convince, to explore, or to excuse oneself. Practice exercises from workbooks that are not authentic uses of language must be avoided (Edelsky, 1987). Thus, complete and whole texts, such as whole stories and complete newspaper articles, must be used for reading. For writing, letters that are mailed, stories that are shared with real audiences, and directions to real locations are excellent sources of authentic communication.

Writing and reading, like speaking and listening, proceed from whole to part. Thus, comprehension of written text leads to an awareness and knowledge of sound-symbol correspondences (phonics). We can make meaningful generalizations about these correspondences only after we understand what we've read and not the other way around. Likewise, the actual writing of meaningful text leads to a knowledge of grammar, spelling generalizations, and so on.

There is no set hierarchy of skills or experiences that all adults must master in sequence. Reading and writing are complex and, in many respects, simultaneous processes: They cannot be broken down into tiny, isolated skills that are then taught in a hierarchical and linear manner. Readers and writers, even those who are very proficient, often cannot articulate or demonstrate specific skills or competencies. Our language competence is almost never captured by our language performance: We always know more than we are able to display at any given time. Similarly, we can be quite competent readers and writers and still be unable to talk about reading and writing using technical terms such as "gerund" or "digraph" or "paragraph transition."

Assessment and evaluation of whole language must itself be holistic (Harp, 1991). We cannot assess growth by using some standardized or criterion-referenced test that measures isolated, partial, or purposeless language skills. To do so would be like evaluating the quality of an apple by using standards typically applied not even to oranges, but to plastic spoons.

Edelsky, C. (1987). *Writing in a bilingual program: Había una vez.* Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Edelsky, C., Altwerger, B., & Flores, B. (1991). *Whole language: What's the difference?* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Freire, P. (1970). The adult literacy process as cultural action for freedom. *Harvard Educational Review, 40,* 205-221.

Freire, P., & Macedo, D. (1987). *Literacy: Reading the word and the world.* South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Harvey.

Gaber-Katz, E., & Watson, G. (1991). Combining practice and theory in community literacy. *Literacy 2000: Make the next ten years matter.* [Conference summary]. New Westminster, British Columbia, Canada: Douglas College.

Goodman, K.S. (1989). Roots of the whole language movement. *Elementary School Journal, 90*(2), 113-127.

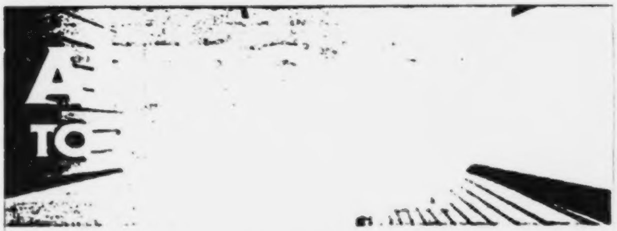
Goodman, K., & Goodman, Y. (1981). *A whole language comprehension centered view of reading development: A position paper.* (Occasional Papers No. 1). Tucson: University of Arizona, College of Education, Program in Language & Literacy.

Harp, B. (Ed.). (1991). *Evaluation and assessment in whole language programs.* Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon.

Watson, D. (1989). Defining and describing whole language. *Elementary School Journal, 90*(2), 129-141.

▲ ▲ ▲

The above is an excerpt from *Approaches to Adult ESL Literacy Instruction* edited by JoAnn Crandall and Joy Kreeft Peyton, published in October 1993 by the Center for Applied Linguistics and Delta Systems.



We've waited a long time for *Approaches to Adult ESL Literacy Instruction*, and here it is! This book summarizes instructional approaches now being used with adults in the United States who are learning English as a second language. The approaches included are competency-based, Freirean or participatory, whole language, language experience, and learner-generated writing and publishing. Chapters include a discussion of the theoretical basis for the approach, sample activities, strategies and techniques, and sources of related reading. Each chapter is concise and readable and the book is reasonably priced, so it is well suited for staff training.

It's available for $12.95 plus shipping and handling from Delta Systems at (800) 323-8270 or (815) 363-3582.

Chapter 1

An Academic Discussion on Narrative and Structure of Narrative

I would like to start out the discussion of the theoretical background to this manual on storytelling with a rather lengthy quotation from Reading for the Plot by Peter Brooks (1984) since it supplies the reader with a summary of the most important themes and helps to set the stage.

"Our lives are ceaselessly intertwined with narrative, with the stories we tell and hear told, those we dream or imagine or would like to tell, all of which are reworked in that story of our lives that we narrate to ourselves in an episodic, sometimes semi-conscious, but virtually uninterrupted monologue. We live immersed in narrative, recounting and reassessing the meaning of our past actions, anticipating the outcome of our future projects, situating ourselves at the intersection of several stories not yet completed. The narrative impulse is as old as our oldest literature: myth and folk tale appear to be stories we recount in order to explain and understand where no other form of explanation will work. The desire and the competence to tell stories also reach back to an early stage in an individual's development, to about the age of three, when a child begins to show the ability to put together a narrative in coherent fashion and especially the conventional 'genre' - because of its potential for summary and retransmission: The fact is that we can still recognize 'the story' even when its medium has been considerably changed. This characteristic of narrative has led some theorists to suppose that it is itself a language, with its own code and its own rules for forming messages from the code, a hypothesis that probably does not hold up to inspection because narrative appears always to depend on some other language code in the creation of its meanings. But it does need to be considered as an operation important to all of our lives. When we 'tell a story,' there tends to be a shift in the register of our voices, enclosing and setting off the narrative almost in the manner of the traditional 'once upon a time' and 'they lived happily ever after'; narrative demarcates, encloses, establishes limits, orders (pp .3-4)."

The foregoing quotation from Peter Brooks' work touches upon the most important findings and theories in a discipline sometimes called narratology, to set it apart from other branches of literary theory. A virtual flood of academic works has been created on the subject, and many universities offer courses in this area. The courses are intended to bridge the gaps between the different social sciences, studies in literature and the arts, and even the natural sciences. Little of these findings have found application in the real world except as a way of analyzing the construct of social environments and cultural make-up.

Psychology and psychotherapy have been an exception to this in as much as patients have (at least since Freud) been encouraged to construct and reconstruct the "stories" of their lives through which many have found the ability to understand and heal rifts in their personal make-up and create a "myth" by which they are able to live and grow(See Note 1 at end of chapter).

The therapeutic employment of storytelling or myth recitation, though, is much older than the findings of depth-psychology. Claude Levi-Strauss, an eminent French anthropologist, points out the difference and the common denominator of psychoanalysis and shamanistic healing methods as follows:

"Both cures (shamanistic and the psychoanalytic) aim at inducing an experience, and both succeed by recreating a myth which the patient has to live or relive. But in one case, the patient constructs an individual myth with elements drawn from the past; in the other case, the patient receives from the outside a social myth which does not correspond to a former state(Claude Levi-Strauss, 1963, p. 199)."

Both Peter Brooks and Levi-Strauss point out the narrative structuring of life experiences the individuals within a society are involved in. Levi-Strauss concentrates on the patient's need to develop a myth in the psychotherapeutic setting, and Brooks recognizes the perpetual story formation leading every individual through his or her life in the process of making sense of the multitude of disconnected experiences. Taking the two statements together, we get two relevant positions: storytelling and the formation of stories are essential to our understanding of who we are and to our psychic well-being.

Storytelling is essentially human. There is not one human culture in the world which doesn't create its sense of identity through the stories it tells and retells with minor changes in content to absorb the new developments into its time-proven patterns of narrative. Ochberg states, "One of the central ideas that guides the interpretation of life stories...is that self-understanding is always shaped by culture. The tales we tell each other (and ourselves) about who we are and might yet become are individual variations on the narrative templates our culture deems intelligible(1992, p. 214)."

To think that this is only so in tightly-knit "primitive" or tribal societies is a fallacy. In order for us to see the myths we live by, which guide us in the construction of our identities, we would have to step outside ourselves and outside the culture in which we were brought up. Heated debates ensue among the scholars when the possibility to change our narrative constitution is under question.

Telling our life stories within the narrative boundaries our culture supplies is crucial in our attempt at making ourselves known and intelligible. Writing or telling our personal life experiences within the form of a story can retroactively give us a sense of the eternal script we live and construct ourselves by and supply us with the possibility for change.

Storytelling (in all its aspects: listening, talking, writing) is an interaction between cultural norms and individual experiences. In this, as Brooks points out, it is akin to language itself, which supplies the speaker with its words which are vehicle and constriction for expression at the same time. How often in life do we come up against a barrier in communication where words cannot be found to overcome it, where we are tempted to make our own contribution to the dictionary with a new invention?

Just as we cannot start talking gibberish, when language fails in communication, we cannot tell a story without its essential building blocks: beginning, middle, end, and the transformation which takes place within. Imagine telling the tale of "Hansel and Gretel" to a child and ending your narration with the children wandering through the dark forest. You could say, "That's life! We are all wandering through the dark forest, not knowing where we are going or which horrible beast will attack us from behind the next tree." You might be right, but most healthy individuals project a happy outcome no matter how dark the forest they are in, and almost any parent would take the children lost in the forest back home. There is a fundamental need for the kind of satisfaction the end of a story leaves the listener/reader with. This holds true not only for the positive outcomes as in fairy tales or Hollywood movie productions, but also for Shakespearean or Greek tragedies.

There is an essential difference between life as it is lived and life as it is narrated. Our decisions on when the life of a person ought to be considered as having begun and when that life can be considered over, abortion laws, and questions dealing with euthanasia will always be under dispute in human society - and the decisions will always be arbitrary.

Life as it is lived is always in the "middle," no matter what age we are. In order to grasp the whole, we conjure up the past as memory and design the future in the way of projection. Frank Kermode puts this fundamental human need for narrative/story into these words:

"Men, like poets, rush 'into the middest,' in medias res, when they are born; they also die in mediis rebus, and to make sense of their span they need fictive concords with origins and ends, such as give meaning to lives and to poems. The end they imagine will reflect their irreducible intermediary preoccupations (Kermode, 1966, p. 7.)."

Life, the reality of being in the middle, where one thing happens after another after another after another and at the same time as another, where we disconnectedly get caught up in images of the past, catch ourselves daydreaming, feel pain about one thing and joy about another, is not a story in itself. In order to create a story, particular instances of our experiences are brought to the foreground and connected to each other governed by a law of logical consequentiality or the line of our plot. Whatever doesn't fit this pattern drops into the background where it might stay until a later formation of a story in which it will have its rightful place.

Telling a story is a process of discrimination and demarcation as we mark a point in time as its beginning and another as its end. In doing so we compose a whole in which all parts are connected to each other and work together in the creation of meaning. Here also lies the big difference between autobiographical storywriting and the writing of a journal. Both have joined subject matter, but the beginning of the journal is not necessarily connected to its end; in a journal we write whatever comes to mind without imperative discrimination against flashes of thought that might not fit our story line. Journal writing is openended; there is always more to say or write about; there is no need for a conclusion.

On the whole the foresaid is true, but on a deeper level, even in journal writing and free association, we might not be able to escape the storytelling mode which is so heavily linked to
our identity.

Often when words fail to express our experiences, we resort to the story; we take our listeners on a journey from a beginning to the end, thereby communicating and reaching our listener on a deeper, more emotionally involving level. Here we communicate meaning not through one word or one sentence, but through the whole of the story. Storytelling is as essential to human communication as is the grammatical structure of the sentence or the phonemic structure to the word.

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Note 1: Myth in this sense is not to be understood with its derogative connotation as false belief or deception, but in the sense of a way of looking at the world that lends meaning to life as it is perceived. Myth as used here is beyond the categories of true or false.

Chapter 2
An Appeal to Bring Theory into Praxis: F. E. Kazemek

As I have mentioned in the beginning of the last chapter, knowledge of the uses of storytelling and theories developed in the field of narratology have mainly inhabited the brain cells of the academic world. Building on this background, Frances E. Kazemek has put forward an appeal to apply this knowledge in the world of adult basic and literacy education(ABLE).

His article "'In Ignorance to View a Small Portion and Think That All': The False Promise of Job Literacy" (Boston University, Journal of Education, Volume 173, Number 1, 1991) has inspired this research and curriculum development project. You can find the article in its full length in the appendix to this manual. At this point, I would like to take up some of his major arguments, attempt to give a summary, and explore some of the ramifications.

Right at the outset of his article Francis Kazemek asks the crucial question which so often is answered from a limited perspective or gets lost altogether when judgment is passed on literacy and illiteracy: What is literacy for?

People with limited literacy and inferior education have a hard time finding employment. The obvious and superficial conclusion drawn from this fact is that adult literacy training ought to be "primarily, if not exclusively, work-related (Kazemek 1991, p. 51)." This discussion veils details of the whole picture. Illiteracy, although it cuts across class lines, is not a major stumbling block for members of the middle or upper class who have ways to get by in the work world despite their limited abilities. "The real issue of literacy education in the United States concerns poor and minority people" whose lot in this society would not improve miraculously if the advocated job literacy were reached. Literacy-as-job-training "continues to justify an unjust social and economic system (p. 53)."

Kazemek takes a close look at the level of literacy required for the kind of employment open to minority groups and the poor and concludes that this kind of literacy, "rudimentary and often very specialized" (p. 56), can best be learned on the job itself.

"Literacy training for employment is in the final analysis not designed to further the interest of those with limited reading and writing abilities. Rather, it is designed to advance the interest of certain elite groups in society, whether they be governmental, corporate, or class-based. As such, the current literacy training-for-job focus is ultimately dangerous to the democratic well-being of our society (p. 52)." "The ultimate reason for literacy, and for adult literacy education, is (should be) to foster the continuous reconstruction of experience by individuals, and thus the continuous reconstruction of society (p. 51)."

Language use, according to James Britton's study (1982), made reference to in Kazemek's article, can be divided up into two categories: the transactional and the expressive/poetic. Job literacy, arbitrarily determining a basic and purely functional type of literacy, stays within the, transactional category.

"Poetic uses of language are an inherent part of our human nature," Britton contends. They are vital, he says, because they allow us to stand back from the daily, ongoing, often subconscious, task-focused transactional language situations in which we most often find ourselves. Instead of simply focusing on language as a utilitarian tool to get things done, poetic use of language allows us to get broader, and perhaps newer, perspectives on our lives, situations, and possibilities. Expressive and poetic uses of literacy are potentially 'dangerous' to those in power because they foster the imagination and its infinite possibilities (Kazemek, p.56)."

Should adult literacy educators or any person teaching someone else how to read and write, work along on such a "revolutionary" scheme? It's not a question of choice really, if we want to adhere to the principles of a democratic society, whose members contribute to its formation and its constant re-formation."Imaginative uses of literacy," Kazemek argues, "offer us the possibility of creating and participating in new and, hopefully, better communities and a better nation; they offer us the possibility of creating and recreating better selves...Imaginative uses of literacy are potentially revolutionary and dangerous to the status quo. They give us the power to envision different worlds (Kazemek p.57)."

Jerome Bruner, informing Kazemek and leading him to the proposal of a new metaphor for adult literacy education, takes a look at our ability to know the world. He concludes that there are two general modes of thought: the paradigmatic, constituting the basis of logic, mathematics and science, and the narrative mode which, he says, we know much less about since Western society has placed more emphasis on the former. The loss resulting from this one-sidedness has been mourned many years ago already by Walter

Benjamin in his essay "The Storyteller."

"Less and less frequently do we encounter people with the ability to tell a tale properly. More and more often there is embarrassment all around when the wish to hear a story is expressed. It is as if something that seemed inalienable to us, the securest among our possessions, were taken from us: the ability to exchange experiences (Benjamin 1961,p.83)."

Hand in hand with this diminishing ability to tell a story and the diminishing value of experience goes the loss of authority and self-esteem. Hand in hand with this, according to Benjamin, also goes the diminishing sense for what is right and what is wrong.

StoryPower Lines

Doris Lessing, in her account of her 1988 visit to Zimbabwe, African Laughter, describes a school for young Zimbabweans, its library, and one of its dedicated teachers.

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"Jack instructs a couple of the pupils to take us next door and show us the library. His pride and joy. He created it. There was no library at all. . . The library is a narrow room, like a wide corridor, and it has perhaps three hundred books in it. Obsolete textbooks. Novels donated by well-wishers or by those . . . This pathetic, almost bare room, taught me that what is needed are simply written stories about different parts of the world, explaining ways of living, religions, other people's ideas. . . . Tolstoy, when he was running that wonderful village school of his, talked of the need for simply-told informative stories. Astonishing how often Russian experience is relevant to Africa. . . . With a library and perhaps some sympathetic adult to advise them, there is nothing in the world they cannot study. A good library - I am well used to saying, reminding people of our remarkable inheritance - is a treasure house, and we take it for granted. . . . With a library you are free, not confined by certainly temporary political climates. It is the most democratic of institutions because no one - but no one at all - can tell you what to read and when and how(pp. 203-206)."

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From: Lessing, D. (1992). African laughter: Four visits to Zimbabwe. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.

BOOKS CHANGE LIVES

BOOKS
GIVE US
WINGS

BOOKS CHANGE LIVES
THE CENTER FOR THE BOOK

"Books Change Lives" is the 1993-94 theme of the fifth national literacy and reading promotion campaign by the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress.

The campaign has so far been joined by nearly 30 affiliated state centers for the book and 128 reading promotion partners that reflect a spectacular diversity of constituencies. They include major professional literacy and library organizations, eight federal agencies--including Education--labor unions, large service organizations such as Kiwanis International and the National Council of Negro Women, the National Indian Education Association, Cartoonists Across America, United States Swimming, three major press associations, and Thompson Newspapers, one of the largest newspaper groups in the United States and Canada.

Brochures, posters, and other materials on the importance of reading are available from the Center for the Book, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540-8200.

With the support of the U.S. Congress and private donors and collectors, the Library acquires research materials from around the globe and in more than 450 languages. It is the largest library in the world, holding over 100 million items including at least 20 million books.

"Books Change Lives" is the Library's national reading promotion theme for 1993, a theme that the Library's principal founder, Thomas Jefferson, would have heartily supported. His love of books and learning helped shape the life of the newborn United States. And his personal library, encompassing all fields of knowledge, became the foundation of today's Library of Congress.

The Center for the Book in the Library of Congress is devoted, in the Jeffersonian spirit, to increasing public awareness of the importance of books and reading. We invite readers everywhere to join with us, and with the writers in these pages, for a year of literary musing, reflection and enjoyment.

John Y. Cole, Director
The Center for the Book in the Library of Congress

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Chapter 3
Developing A Low-Cost, Easy-Loan, On-Site ABLE Storytelling Library

In 1992-93 we officially began(at least, that's what one of us told the IRS)the process of donating books to The Learning Place in York. Most of these books were books which we had originally purchased for ourselves because we wanted to read them. Having read all or parts of them and having no place to house them at home, we decided, after much soul searching and discussion among ourselves and with our children and spouses, that it might be a good idea to bring our books to The Learning Place. After all, we could still re-read them or rediscover them in their new home. The point that we want to make in this manual is that good books in our bookcases at home and on our reading tables and piled dozens deep on our bedroom and office or den floors at home weren't being read. By bringing them to our adult learning center, one at a time or several at a time in box after box, someone else, student or staff, might have an opportunity to spend some time with them, to get something useful and encouraging from them. Now, after two years of a conscious effort to acquire a low-cost, easy-loan, on-site ABLE(Adult Basic and Literacy Education)Storytelling Library - the 1993-94 year, of course, being the time of the 353-supported book acquisition process - we are pleased to say that all of our book-gathering energies have been well worth the time, money, and fuss.

Even though an excellent public library, York's Martin Memorial Library, is just three blocks from our ABE site, we felt at the time we started, and maybe even more so now, that assembling a few hundred assorted books into an easy-access library would do far more good than harm(we really haven't come up with any negative results yet). Will our ABE students be less likely to use our city and county library system while they are enrolled in one or more of our programs here? On the contrary, they have probably used local public library and school district library facilities even more than they would have had they not been involved in one or more of our programs. We have walked up to the library with them, and we have facilitated the library-joining process for at least a few of them. We have also helped to arrange family literacy training and involvement for those of our ABE students who have expressed an interest in participating in the York County Literacy Council's related programs. We have seen that coming across a book of interest here might lead a student to look elsewhere for more books by the same author or for other books on the topic the student is investigating or studying. Our little on-site library isn't competing with other libraries for funding or for users.

A Few Reasons Why Giving Our Personal Books to an ABLE Library is a Good Idea

1.) Books in a public place such as our ABE site will more likely be read by at least one more person than the same books stored, stuffed, or housed somewhere in our homes.

2.) We will still have access to our donations, and we are more likely to suggest a book to a colleague or a student if that book is within easy reach.

3.) We have the choice either to donate our books permanently to our ABLE Library or to place them here on temporary loan.

4.) If we want to donate them, actually give them forever to our ABLE Library, we have the option of offering them up via a non-cash charitable contribution as a very legitimate IRS itemized deduction. One of us, a beyond-hope biblioholic, has done this for a few years. See the IRS guidelines in this manual for more particulars on recent IRS provisions. Just remember that you can't take them back after you have made this decision to donate your books to your non-profit ABE programs. The paperwork isn't really very complicated, especially if you aren't talking about more than a $250 contribution. Even if you are, it is still a good tax-reducing opportunity. The books are being used, and you might reduce your tax payment by a few dollars.

5.) When we give because we really want to see others benefit, we are investing in the present and future learning and personal growth of our students and we are helping to make our local programs more inviting. A goodwill offering can go far beyond the ten cents or ten dollars we have paid for a book in terms of its value to our students and to our programs' collective image in the community. It's just another aspect of good public relations.

6.) Without making specific references to a good book many of us know and own, quiet behind-the-scenes giving has its own rewards. We'll feel better for having given good books to our local ABE sites. If we have really read them, they'll always be a part of us even though we no longer physically own them.

Charitable Contributions - Substantiation and Disclosure Requirements

UNDER THE NEW LAW, CHARITIES WILL NEED TO PROVIDE NEW KINDS OF INFORMATION TO DONORS. Failure to do so may result in denial of deductions to donors and the imposition of penalties on charities.

Legislation signed into law by the President on August 10, 1993, contains a number of significant provisions affecting tax-exempt charitable organizations described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. These provisions include: (1) new substantiation requirements for donors, and (2) new public disclosure requirements for charities (with potential penalties for failing to comply). Additionally, charities should note that donors could be penalized by loss of the deduction if they fail to substantiate. **THE SUBSTANTIATION AND DISCLOSURE PROVISIONS APPLY TO CONTRIBUTIONS MADE AFTER DECEMBER 31, 1993.**

Charities need to familiarize themselves with these tax law changes in order to bring themselves into compliance. This Publication alerts you to the new provisions affecting tax-exempt charitable organizations. Set forth below are brief descriptions of the new law's key provisions. The Internal Revenue Service plans to provide further guidance in the near future.

Donor's Substantiation Requirements

Documenting Certain Charitable Contributions. — Beginning January 1, 1994, no deduction will be allowed under section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code for any charitable contribution of $250 or more unless the donor has contemporaneous written substantiation from the charity. In cases where the charity has provided goods or services to the donor in exchange for making the contribution, this contemporaneous written acknowledgement must include a good faith estimate of the value of such goods or services. Thus, taxpayers may no longer rely solely on a cancelled check to substantiate a cash contribution of $250 or more.

The substantiation must be "contemporaneous." That is, it must be obtained by the donor no later than the date the donor actually files a return for the tax year in which the contribution was made. If the return is filed after the due date or extended due date, then the substantiation must have been obtained by the due date or extended due date.

The responsibility for obtaining this substantiation lies with the donor, who must request it from the charity. The charity is not required to record or report this information to the IRS on behalf of donors.

The legislation provides that substantiation will not be required if, in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary, the charity reports directly to the IRS the information required to be provided in the written substantiation. At present, there are no regulations establishing procedures for direct reporting by charities to the IRS of charitable contributions made in 1994. Consequently, charities and donors should be prepared to provide/obtain the described substantiation for 1994 contributions of $250 or more.

There is no prescribed format for the written acknowledgement. For example, letters, postcards or computer-generated forms may be acceptable. The acknowledgement does not have to include the donor's social security or tax identification number. It must, however, provide sufficient information to substantiate the amount of the deductible contribution. The acknowledgement should note the amount of any cash contribution. However, if the donation is in the form of property, then the acknowledgement must describe, but need not value, such property. Valuation of the donated property is the responsibility of the donor.

The written substantiation should also note whether the donee organization provided any goods or services in consideration, in whole or in part, for the contribution and, if so, must provide a description and good-faith estimate of the value of the goods or services. In the new law these are referred to as "quid pro quo contributions."

Please note that there is a new law requiring charities to furnish disclosure statements to donors for such quid pro quo donations in excess of $75. This is addressed in the next section regarding Disclosure By Charity.

If the goods or services consist entirely of intangible religious benefits, the statement should indicate this, but the statement need not describe or provide an estimate of the value of these benefits. "Intangible religious benefits" are also discussed in the following section on Disclosure By Charity. If, on the other hand, the donor received nothing in return for the contribution, the written substantiation must so state.

The present law remains in effect that, generally, if the value of an item or group of like items exceeds $5,000, the donor must obtain a qualified appraisal and submit an appraisal summary with the return claiming the deduction.

The organization may either provide separate statements for each contribution of $250 or more from a taxpayer, or furnish periodic statements substantiating contributions of $250 or more.

Separate payments are regarded as independent contributions and are not aggregated for purposes of measuring the $250 threshold. However, the Service is authorized to establish anti-abuse rules to prevent avoidance of the substantiation requirement by taxpayers writing separate smaller checks on the same date.

If donations are made through payroll deductions, the deduction from each paycheck is regarded as a separate payment.

A charity that knowingly provides false written substantiation to a donor may be subject to the penalties for aiding and abetting an understatement of tax liability under section 6701 of the Code.

Disclosure by Charity of Receipt of Quid Pro Quo Contribution

Beginning January 1, 1994, under new section 6115 of the Internal Revenue Code, a charitable organization must provide a written disclosure statement to donors who make a payment, described as a "quid pro quo contribution," in excess of $75. This requirement is separate from the written substantiation required for deductibility purposes as discussed above. While, in certain circumstances, an organization may be able to meet both requirements with the same written document, an organization must be careful to satisfy the section 6115 written disclosure statement requirement in a timely manner because of the penalties involved.

A quid pro quo contribution is a payment made partly as a contribution and partly for goods or services provided to the donor by the charity. An example of a quid pro quo contribution is where the donor gives a charity $100 in consideration for a concert ticket valued at $40. In this example, $60 would be deductible. Because the donor's payment (quid pro quo contribution) exceeds $75, the disclosure statement must be furnished, even though the deductible amount does not exceed $75.

Separate payments of $75 or less made at different times of the year for separate fundraising events will not be aggregated for purposes of the $75 threshold. However, the Service is authorized to develop anti-abuse rules to prevent avoidance of this disclosure requirement in situations such as the writing of multiple checks for the same transaction.

The required written disclosure statement must:

(1) inform the donor that the amount of the contribution that is de-

ductible for federal income tax purposes is limited to the excess of any money (and the value of any property other than money) contributed by the donor over the value of goods or services provided by the charity, and

(2) provide the donor with a good-faith estimate of the value of the goods or services that the donor received.

The charity must furnish the statement in connection with either the solicitation or the receipt of the quid pro quo contribution. If the disclosure statement is furnished in connection with a particular solicitation, it is not necessary for the organization to provide another statement when the associated contribution is actually received.

The disclosure must be in writing and must be made in a manner that is reasonably likely to come to the attention of the donor. For example, a disclosure in small print within a larger document might not meet this requirement.

In the following three circumstances, the disclosure statement is not required.

(1) Where the only goods or services given to a donor meet the standards for "insubstantial value" set out in section 3.01, paragraph 2 of Rev. Proc. 90-12, 1990-1 C.B. 471, as amplified by section 2.01 of Rev. Proc. 92-49, 1992-1 C.B. 987 (or any updates or revisions thereof);

(2) Where there is no donative element involved in a particular transaction with a charity, such as in a typical museum gift shop sale.

(3) Where there is only an intangible religious benefit provided to the donor. The intangible religious benefit must be provided to the donor by an organization organized exclusively for religious purposes, and must be of a type that generally is not sold in a commercial transaction outside the donative context. An example of an intangible religious benefit would be admission to a religious ceremony. The exception also generally applies to de minimis tangible benefits, such as wine, provided in connection with a religious ceremony. The intangible religious benefit exception, however, does not apply to such items as payments for tuition for education leading to a recognized degree, or for travel services, or consumer goods.

A penalty is imposed on charities that do not meet the disclosure requirements. For failure to make the required disclosure in connection with a quid pro quo contribution of more than $75, there is a penalty of $10 per contribution, not to exceed $5,000 per fundraising event or mailing. The charity may avoid the penalty if it can show that the failure was due to reasonable cause.

Please note that the prevailing basic rule allowing donor deductions only to the extent that the payment exceeds the fair market value of the goods or services received in return still applies generally to all quid pro quo contributions. The $75 threshold pertains only to the obligation to disclose and the imposition of the $10 per contribution penalty, not the rule on deductibility of the payment.

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Book Exchanges

Do you know if there are paperback/book exchange businesses in your area? For years we have been visiting two such businesses in the York area, but only in the last few years have we shopped there for books to put into our Storytelling/ABLE Library. The Paperback Trade is located just north of York on Route 30 in the Maple Village Plaza No. 2 strip mall. It is a large supermarket-sized single room containing thousands of used paperbacks in row after row of easy-to-reach person-high shelving in the middle and ceiling-high shelving around the walls. It is a book lover's dream come true! If you have any paperbacks(in good condition, please!) to exchange, take them to the counter as soon as you go in. A friendly staff member will go through your pile of paperbacks and tell you what they will accept. You will then receive a credit slip for one-fourth(25%) of the cover price total of your books. Don't expect to receive any money. After you have browsed through the very large collection at The Paper-back Trade, you will probably have found some books you want to acquire. Take them to the counter. A store employee will charge you one-half(50%) of the total cover price of the books you buy. If you have a credit slip for that amount or more, you don't have to pay a cent in cash for your "purchase." If you have no credit, they will be happy to take your money. We have shopped or swapped at this store many times in the last few years. We have always received polite and fair treatment. We have often left feeling a little guilty about the good reading we have carried home at low or no actual cash cost.

The other similar business in our area is The Recycled Reader. This store is located off Kenneth & Loucks Rd., one-quarter mile east of the West Manchester Mall, and just a few miles away from The Paperback Trade. Both stores are open six days a week, have limited evening hours, and are closed on Sundays. The Recycled Reader is much smaller than The Paperback Trade, but it still advertises that it has 30,000 books. It gives 30% credit for new releases and also advertises that it offers best seller rentals. Both stores have organized and categorized their stock for relatively easy search and seize missions. The credit and purchase arrangements(50% of cover price)are very similar at both stores. Both stores have an amazing variety of fiction and nonfiction paperbacks. Even if you have no credit going in, you probably won't feel too much financial drain going out. The key is to shop around and take your time. On several occasions we have found multiple editions of the book we wanted and have walked away with an older and much cheaper book which was in better condition than the newer, more expensive editions. Because these stores are book trade or exchange businesses, there is a constant change in the stock. If you can't find a specific book or favorite author on one visit, it might be there the next time. We suspect that many of our fellow ABE practitioners are book lovers who won't mind acquiring a used book or two. We know our students don't mind. New books are nice, but most ABE budgets don't allow for large general-reading purchases. We consider ourselves lucky to have money for regular ABE/GED/ESL texts and workbooks. Go to your local book exchange and start enjoying the low-cost additions to your personal and ABE site libraries.

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We have also been shopping at area used book stores for the past couple years. We were delighted to discover that there are three such stores within one block of one another on West Market Street in York. A search in the yellow pages will probably give you a clue or two as to whether or not there are used book stores in your area. If you find such a store, you will very likely find out about other stores in the area or even in your county or larger region. The used-book people have quite an intricate network in operation, with individual book dealers and mom-and-pop operations in constant contact with one another. Prices will vary, of course, from really cheap(less than a dollar) to several times the cover price if you find a rare first-edition hardbound. We paid $35.00 for a first-edition copy of a John C. Gardner, Jr. novel (October Light) which one of us coveted and will probably not donate to our collection, but most books are for sale for a few dollars or so, rarely for more than six or seven dollars. Unlike our experience with the paperback exchange stores, it is usually harder for us to find what we are looking for in these used book establishments. In the smaller places, however, the owner or employee on duty will be quite willing to assist us if we have a particular author or topic in mind. In all of these stores cash is the means of the exchange. Again, the key to low-cost book acquisition is in taking your time to find bargains. We have literally found treasures in trash heaps in used book stores. As they say, one person's junk is another person's gold (or something like that).

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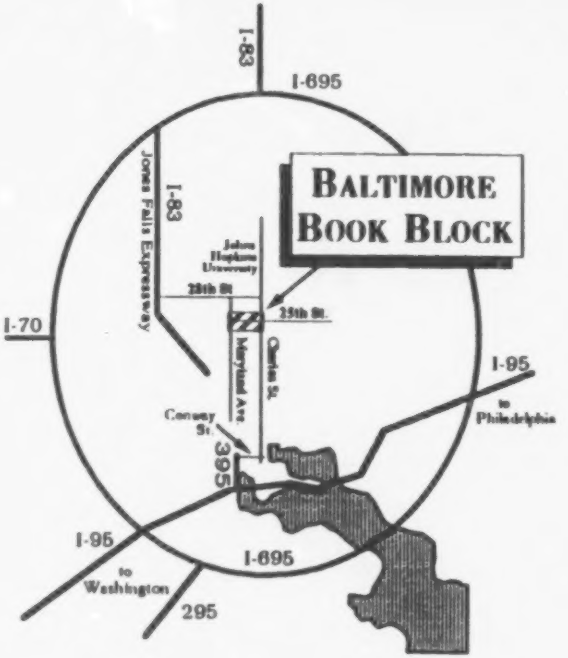
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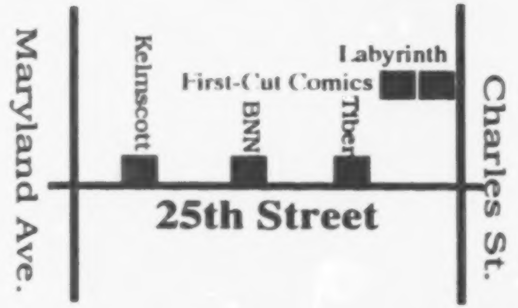
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As we mentioned above, the used book dealer network is very sophisticated. From York we have traveled to Lancaster and Gettysburg in search of good books. Although we haven't ventured out of state just to shop for used books, we have learned about the existence of several large new-and-used book stores in Baltimore, Maryland. We couldn't get interstate travel for such purposes into our local or 353 budgets, but we'll find a way to get there.

Special New (well, almost) Book Sales at Temporary Sites

For the past four or five years something new and exciting to our area (York, PA) for book lovers has been the appearance of enormous book sales at temporary sites. For example, one of the first ones we can remember came to a nearby shopping mall area (old North York Mall) and set up operations in what was formerly a large department store. One corporate name that we recall was Emory, but we think there are at least two such floating book sale businesses(the other being Publishers' Warehouse)that have been coming and going. The discount prices are very attractive, usually 50% to 70% off cover prices, and the merchandise is mostly new(not used), meaning published within the last five to ten years and in good condition. Hardbound and paperbacks of all kinds and at great prices are available to the patient book shopper. The key element here is the willingness of ABE staff to look through table after table of these books. There is usually some attempt at organizing the thousands of books that are trucked in by one or more big rigs. Children's books are normally more expensive and placed in one section of the cavern-like interiors where these book sales are normally established. There is usually a table or two of hundreds of college texts and other kinds of educational non-fiction resources such as dual-language dictionaries in English and several other tongues. There is often a table or two of art and music books and a section of self-help books for adults.

When you enter one of these stores, we suggest that you look for a basket or shopping cart. Read all of the signs regarding how the books are priced and marked so you won't be surprised when you line up to pay for your finds at the one or two cash registers that have been set up to keep things organized. Because we have gone back to these temporary book store operations many times during the month or so that they usually stay in one place, we have discovered that the discounts can go as high as 90% on many items. Of course, if you find a book you really want to own or purchase for your ABE site, it is risky to wait for that book's price to be reduced. It might not be there next time. We have spent hours and hours at these mobile book sales, and we have acquired hundreds of dollars worth of good books and related materials (calendars, software, etc.). Maybe two thousand dollars in value is a better estimate of what we have bought and shared for one or two hundred dollars total in the last four years. These books have been well worth the hours it took to find them.

We heard about the first such book sale because one our staff told us there was a large sign hanging over the entrance to what used to be a fairly popular discount department store. A few days later we received a letter form the book sale company which invited us to visit and offered us $25.00 worth of free books for our school (adult education program). We are pleased to report that they were polite to us and fully honored that offer. We felt guilty walking away with the loot. The problem with such book sales, of course, is that they come and go. We chanced upon a site near Lancaster where a similar operation has come and gone twice in the last two years. Our advice is to take advantage of such opportunities while you can. We have also purchased several books as gifts for friends and relatives. They'll never know unless you tell them that the fifty-dollar book you gave them cost you just five dollars. Again, as we have stressed above, our ABE students and colleagues feel good about the bookshelves at The Learning Place which have many new as well as used books for all to use. The temporary book sales are very interesting and often quite profitable experiences. We have even encountered some of our ABE students there. What a pleasure!

Large New-Book Stores (Discount or Potluck)

A year or two ago, to book lovers especially, a very welcome addition to the greater Park City shopping area near Lancaster, PA came in the form of a very large and extremely inviting super-book store under the corporate name of Borders Book Store. Borders is one of the classiest book stores that we have ever browsed. Most of the books are expensive, that is, sold at cover prices, but this interesting place has some good bargains too. There are so many attractive features about Borders that we'll just mention a few. The store is nicely decorated and designed. There are chairs and a few couches available at different locations for the book lover to check out the goods. There is a separate area for children's books of all kinds which has toys and a play area for little pre-readers. A coffee and pastry shop sits off to the right of the main entrance. There are tables and chairs for customers who want to relax over tea or coffee and enjoy the highly literate atmosphere. The organization and display of the thousands of new books, paperback and hardbound, is superior to any other store we have ever visited - and we have been to bookshops and stores in major cities. If you can't find what you are looking for at Borders, good luck to you. Of course, if it's in print, they'll be happy to order it for you. The place is really a treat to visit. And sometimes you will find a true bargain, maybe outside on the discount tables or around the corner from the large check-out (multiple cash register operation!area. The place just oozes with the excitement of good stories, intellectual growth, and new information on just about every professional, personal, or avocational/recreational interest you might have. It's a special place for those of us fortunate enough to have a means of transportation, a few dollars to spend on quality books, and a love of literature, life, and learning.

We don't want to ignore other book stores such as The Provident Bookstores, the Waldenbooks stores, the Book Warehouse stores, the Bookland stores, B. Dalton Bookseller, and the Encore stores. There are also many specialty stores such as New Age and Christian-based book stores. There are usually bargain tables or displays at these stores. We have certainly found some good buys for personal and professional use. **Don't forget the Yellow Pages of your local phone book. Look under "Book Dealers-Retail" and "Book Dealers-Used and Rare".**

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To the Customer

From the thousands of books offered by publishers as remainders every year, Dædalus chooses those books which, in our judgment, are of lasting value. We try to find a good mix between the books offered by commercial publishers for the literate book-buying community, and those offered by university presses which are of general interest. We hope that the quality of the books in this catalog demonstrates that they are not "books that didn't sell," but books (whether best-seller, classic, or disappointment) whose remaining stock at publishers' warehouses was larger than the projected future sale. Many of the finest books published every year are remaindered to make room for another season's hopefuls. We at Dædalus are devoted to keeping good books before the reading public.

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Besides our occasionally opinionated blurb, we try to give the customer the bibliographic information he or she needs. The "list" price is the current or last list price at which the book was available from the publisher. The "sale" price in color is the price you pay. If the book is a paperback, "(pap)" will appear after the publisher's name. If not otherwise stated, the book is a hardcover with a dust jacket in "perfect" condition. We do not sell "hurts." Some of our books have been purchased from book clubs, but we purchase books only from book clubs which use publisher's editions or use production standards that are similar. The numbers in parentheses at the end of the blurb indicate the number of pages and the year of publication. (pages/date)

The Blurbs

There are two people who write the blurbs for this catalog: Robin Moody and Helaine Harris. The other blurber is responsible for solecisms, oxymorons and undue hyperbole.

The Cover

The photograph by Wallace Kirkland on the cover was taken from *The Many Faces of Hull-House* which we are offering on page 33.

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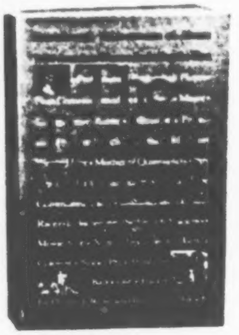
ERICA JONG
BECOMING LIGHT
Poems · New and Selected

98



40007
THE BOOK OF WOMEN'S FIRSTS
Breakthrough Achievements of Almost 1,000 American Women
Phyllis J. Read & Bernard L. Witlieb.
Random House/QPB (pap) 16.00 4.98

This book presents the American women who were the first to accomplish some breakthrough, from important—Jane Addams: First woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize (1931)—to the merely interesting—Sadie Allen: First woman in a woman-man team to successfully ride through the Niagara Falls rapids in a barrel (1886). Also, Mae West: First woman to have survival gear named after her (late 1930s). There is a short, usually ½-page, biography of each woman, headed by her breakthrough accomplishment, arranged alphabetically by the woman's name. Some of the alphabetical listings are not keyed on a name, but an event, like: *Jury, First Sexually Integrated*. From the first female professional basketball player to the first female test pilot, you'll find fascinating portraits of women who

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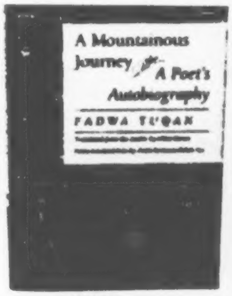

The Pursuit of Pleasure

31247
A MOUNTAINOUS JOURNEY
A Poet's Autobiography
Fadwa Tuqan. Graywolf. 18.95 3.98

A Mountainous Journey tells the story of one of the Arab world's best-known poets and feminists. The book offers a rare glimpse of Arab culture from a woman's perspective, and a portrait of Fadwa Tuqan's struggle against incredible cultural odds to bring her talent and individuality to flower. Women are so lightly regarded in the Arab community that Tuqan's mother couldn't remember exactly when her daughter was born. According to custom, Tuqan was pulled from school and confined to her house, when she was quite young. She was not even allowed to read the newspapers. She served her brothers faithfully. Gradually she began to be tutored in the art of poetry by her brother, who was already known as a poet, and to write poems herself. She published them, attracting a wide and enthusiastic readership, and became active in political issues. Tuqan is recognized today as one of the most distinguished Arab poets. She still lives in Nablus, on the West Bank of the Jordan, where she was born. *A Mountainous Journey* tells her story from her childhood between the wars to the occupation of the West Bank by the Israelis in 1967, almost to the present day. The book, which was translated by Olive Kenny, includes a selection of her poetry, translated by Naomi Shihab Nye.

at discount prices get on a direct-mail book company list. We will use Daedalus Books as our example because we have had good responses - and good deals - from them both before and during our current 1993-94 353 program year. All of the information you will need to get on the Daedalus mailing list and to place an order with them is on the section below from a recent catalog. We have placed personal orders by phone and by mail, and we have placed ABE program and 353 orders by mail through our organization's standard requisition and purchase order procedures. The friendly people at Daedalus have always given us prompt and accurate service. Included also below are some of their clever and very useful blurbs. We can say happily that the blurbs did not lead us to purchase books which turned out to be inappropriate or about topics other than we expected. Many of the books available through Daedalus at significant savings relate to the five GED subject areas and to many career and personal growth concerns of our ABE students. Again, we'll let the blurbs speak for themselves.

Other Discount Stores and Clubs Which Sell Books

We don't want to forget stores such as Ollie's Bargain Store and Sam's Club. Ollie's stores are fascinating places to visit. They advertise "Good Stuff Cheap" and have a big sign hanging near the checkout area which tells us customers that their credit manager is Helen Waite. If we have a problem with paying cash for their merchandise, we are advised to go to Helen Waite. One of us pondered the sign for a few moments before asking his wife to explain the true identity or purpose of Helen Waite. Then he chuckled and chuckled some more. He had finally understood the humor. If you aren't laughing at this true story, please read it over again.

We have found some great book bargains at Ollie's. One of our treasured ABLE Storytelling Library bargains is a hardbound copy of Arctic Dreams: Imagination and Desire in a Northern Landscape, a long work of highly detailed and enlightening nonfiction by Barry Lopez. We'll return to this wonderful book later in this manual. It cost us a few dollars at Ollie's. The retail or cover price was $22.95. We have used this book for GED and brush-up student reading and sharing. We have found other similar ABLE-connected bargains at Ollie's.

Sam's Club is probably not a new resource for many of our readers, but we mention it because sometimes we do find a recent or current best-seller, new and hardbound, there at a reasonable discount price. For the most part, however, 20-to-40% discounts are not what we mean when we talk about low-cost library acquisitions. We really mean "Good Stuff Cheap."

Garage Sales, Yard Sales, and Fetes

One final source of low-cost ABLE Storytelling Library books is that fairly recent free enterprise and often institutional fund-raising phenomenon know as the garage/yard sale or fete. The York Hospital holds a used book sale every spring at its annual fete at the York Fairgrounds. The fete is a very big event which closely rivals the famous York Fair itself which is held in early-mid September. The large inside area under the York Fair Grandstand is the site for the York Hospital Fete's extremely large book sale [illegible] or three days book lovers converge underneath the Grandstand to sort through the thousands of used paperbacks and hardbound books that are arranged into several often helpful categories. The fete volunteers do a good job of organizing the books into such collections such as children's books, young adult, novels, self-help, psychology/sociology, and literary classics. The prices range from ten cents to a few dollars for most of the books. There is even a rare and/or collectible book area where used but more expensive books can be purchased. While we were looking for book bargains near the end of this three-day event, we heard the p.a. system announcement that most of the used books could be purchased at $4.00 per yard. We couldn't believe it, but they meant what they said. We paid a dollar for our one-foot pile of books. We could have lugged out many more for our dollar, but our car was parked too far away for us to drag a yard (a stack three feet high) of books away from the York Hospital Fete. Again, as we have stressed often in this chapter or unit, be prepared to take your time in searching for good books for your personal and ABLE Library collections. The great finds and bargains are there, especially if you get there early and can beat the crowds. It's very refreshing to see that there really are many, many people, children and adults, out there who like to read. What else could they be doing with all those books? Smaller events such as family yard sales or local church fetes are also a source of good and low-cost library acquisitions. Every year one of our local churches has a big yard sale which includes a few tables of books. We can't think of a year when we didn't buy at least one good book at fifty cents or less at the Yorkshire U.M.'s Annual Fete. Also applicable here, as we noted in more detail above, is the chance to contribute to a worthy social cause, local charity project, or outreach mission by buying some books at very low prices.

Some Thoughts on Selection and Quality of ABLE Library Acquisitions

It's very simple, really, when we work hard to say in a brief statement just what we mean by "good stuff" or quality books. We have been asking ourselves what we personally like to read, what we are interested in reading about and in learning more about. Then we have been thinking about the interests, needs, and concerns of our spouses, our children, our parents, our friends, and our ABLE students. Might we or might any of the others purchase or want to purchase a particular book? How might the book help or entertain or enlighten or teach or inspire or encourage those near and/or dear to us? Can we imagine a possible reader for or use for the book we are looking at? Is the book in fairly good condition? Does it have a cover? If not, can we easily repair the flaws or put some kind of inexpensive cover on it? Would we want the book on one of our bookshelves at home? Even at a dollar or less for a book, we want to think it will be read by at least two people if we buy it. If we can justify our purchase according to the questions we have just summarized above, then we feel that we have acquired a good potential addition to our ABLE Storytelling Library.

Here is a very short account of how we bought a book we have decided to categorize under the GED science and/or personal hobby sign. Because we have been watching Home Shopping Club for a few years and have been buying rings and other kinds of jewelry as gifts for our ABE colleagues and one of our spouses, we have been learning a lot about gemstones, precious and semi-precious. An elderly gentleman visited us a year ago and gave us a big trunkload of recent National Geographic magazines. The October 1991 issue has a super feature article, "Rubies and Sapphires." After we found and shared the article with other staff members here at The Learning Place, we decided to go through the other National Geographic magazines in search of other articles we could make available to our students under the five broad GED subject categories. The article on rubies and sapphires could be placed under GED Science. What we concluded, after a few hours of sorting through and skimming through dozens of these great books(magazines), was that such a GED-curriculum support project was a great idea, but far too time consuming for this particular academic year. Maybe in another year, with or without any funding, we might go deeper into this low-cost ABLE library development idea.

A few months later, when our terrible winter of 1994 was finally ending, we drove over to Borders, a place we have described above, while we were on a shopping expedition to Lancaster's Park City area. Just inside the main entrance alcove, on a bargain book table, we found a paperback entitled, Start Collecting Rocks and Minerals, a nonfiction and personal hobby-type book by geologist LeeAnn Srogi. It also has a little sample package of magnetite, slate, rose quartz, pumice, and banded sandstone attached to the front cover. We couldn't resist buying it when we read the pre-title-page statement, "Every rock tells a story from the earth's past. This book will show you how to read rocks and unlock their secrets." When we read more of the book back at The Learning Place, we smiled at one another when we noted Srogi's comment at the beginning of Chapter 11, "Scientists love to argue. If you show a rock to ten geologists, they'll tell you ten different stories about how it formed(p. 100)." So now we have a few books on rocks and minerals that more than two of us have enjoyed. The next ring or other piece of jewelry one of us acquires which contains some kind of gemstone will probably lead to another trip to our ABLE Storytellling Library. It's fun to learn, and what one of us, student or staff, is learning could very well be of use to us on the job or in the family or community.

A Few Ways to Get our ABLE Students and Colleagues to Use the Library

Now that our project year is coming to a close, we are happy to see that we have developed an ABLE Storytelling Library at low cost, have organized our new books into some interesting and useful categories for ABLE students and staff, and have housed them on attractive new bookshelves that other(non-353) adult literacy grants have enabled us to purchase. We feel that our little manual has offered some good advice and given some good information on how to get good books at low cost, but we also feel that our readers might be curious about what happens to these books after they are placed in their new homes, our ABLE program libraries. Do students and staff really read them? Do GED candidates, for example, really have time for and are they interested in reading books other than the special GED texts and exercise books that most ABE programs already have on their shelves and in their bookcases? Will all of the trouble (well, it was fun for us) of acquiring these books have some kind of big payoff? Can we convince interested ABE/GED/ESL practitioners that it is worth the effort to get these books and encourage their students to read them? The best we can do at this point, in addition to showing you, that interested practitioner, some evidence of student academic growth and self-esteem bolstering from the summary of our data collecting and analysis we describe in our project report, is to put our ideas into suggestion form. Here are some things you can do to get your ABE students and colleagues to use your on-site libraries.

1.) Ask your colleagues and students what they might be interested in reading. Make sure they understand that their reading can be for personal and/or for public purposes. All library use, as with all other Storytelling activity, we feel, should be on a voluntary basis. If you buy books you know your students and colleagues are or might be interested in, those books will probably get some attention from two or more readers. Do you remember the beautiful wedding song which was called "Paul's Song" (of Peter, Paul, and Mary). It goes, "Whenever two or more of you are gathered in His name, there's love." That's how we feel about the power of a team effort in book buying and sharing.

2.) Be ready for what might happen next. Students and staff might start bringing in their own books that they would like to give for the library. As long as they make it clear whether their books are for temporary or for permanent sharing, you will want to make sure that their contribution is acknowledged in some way. We have taken a few minutes to thank our students and colleagues during our storytelling gatherings. This good public relations act can encourage other students and staff to look at these books and maybe read all or parts of them.

3.) Put up motivational posters and signs all over the place. Our staff knows that such visual aids are often good conversation starters with our students, especially with our new or prospective students. They see these colorful and usually very clever posters and signs which urge all of us to be receptive to growing and learning in an ABE atmosphere, and they think, "This is the kind of place where maybe I can make some academic, career, or personal-goal progress." Reading is a kind of building process, and we know that it can often help to give the student-builders we work with a sense of design or direction for their lives.

4.) Use the library yourselves, and don't feel timid about using it when your students can see you searching for, finding, signing out, and spending time with these books. Instead of going back to your office area or desk, if you are lucky enough to have one, to read the books you borrow from the ABLE Storytelling Library, sit down next to or near your students and start reading(silently, of course). This suggestion follows our assumption that many of you teach in ABE programs where instruction is individualized or in programs where students are given time to read and work quietly on their ABE/GED/ESL or brush-up studies and are also encouraged to spend time doing on-site free or voluntary reading. Your personal example does show your students that silent reading is an appropriate and sometimes valuable thing to do in an adult learning site. It also shows your students that you practice what you preach about reading for personal and public purposes.

5.) Make specific suggestions to specific students and colleagues when you know that a book might be of interest to them. As we add new books to the collection and as more staff and students become familiar with more and more books, it is not unusual for one of us to connect a book with a prospective reader because we know something about that reader's concerns and passions. So far it has mainly been from staff to students, but we have recently seen some of our students pointing out books to other students and to staff. Sometimes these suggestions don't lead to intense periods of self-sustained silent reading, but the simple act of sharing with another person a book that might interest them will probably add another strong brick to the house of motivation and retention that many of us in ABE know we never really finish building. There's that building metaphor again!

6.) Carefully select, practice reading, and present passages or complete short "stories" from books which staff and students know are in the ABLE Storytelling Library. The storytelling activity is described in a separate chapter in this manual. We have found it to be one of the best ways of encouraging others to read from the books in our library. This sharing of selected passages is called oral interpretation of prose or poetry by the speech scholars, but we ABE students and staff just call it reading aloud or out loud. This activity is not a daily one at our site; it takes place once or twice a week(five-day week). If a person hears a friend or trusted other read aloud from a new book, that willing listener might become a willing reader and, in turn, share the book or story or essay or poem with another acquaintance.

One of our non-353-funded ABE instructors recently purchased a book for her own personal and professional use which we were very excited about reviewing. Read All About It!, edited by reading advocate-extraordinary Jim Trelease, author of The New Read-Aloud Handbook, is a 1993 publication which contains some wonderful stories, poems, and newspaper pieces Trelease urges us to read aloud with our students.

Our enthusiastic colleague also went to a local program that featured Mr. Trelease in person. Although he didn't focus on reading aloud just to or with adult students, most of the selections in Read All About It! will certainly appeal to ABE students. Our colleague led some recent storytelling sessions by reading from this book. Two well-received readings were from Maya Angelou's I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings and a newspaper piece, "Wrong Mom? Tough!", by Mike Royko. Trelease gives his readers some very useful introductions or author profiles with each selection. We thank our ABE colleague for proving once more how invigorating the 353 synergy can be.

We sincerely believe that our ABE students will make good use of our little storytelling and ABLE library. We know that we will continue to look for and add new books to it. We have come to understand the famous lines from "Field of Dreams" in a very special way. "If you build it, they will come," are the lines that grab us and finally make us act. We are building our storytelling field, and they are coming. In passing, we can't resist sharing our enthusiasm for the work of the man who wrote the novel, Shoeless Joe, which became the movie, "Field of Dreams." You will be surprised by his story, "The Book Buyers," in his 1985 book of stories, The Alligator Report. Thanks, W.P. Kinsella, for inspiring us ABE storytellers.

These are not books, lumps of lifeless paper, but minds alive on the shelves. From each of them goes out its own voice, as inaudible as the streams of sound conveyed day and night by electric waves beyond the range of our physical hearing; and just as the touch of a button on our set will fill the room with music, so by taking down one of these volumes and opening it, one can call into range the far distant voice in time and space, and hear it speaking to us, mind to mind, heart to heart.

Gilbert Highet

From: Crossing Open Ground by Barry Lopez

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We hope you will spend some time with one or more books from our LP Library. Ask your instructor or any other staff member about reading and/or borrowing books.

StoryPower Lines

In 1936 Bruno Schulz, the brilliant Polish writer, published an essay, "The Mythologizing of Reality," in which he defined poetry and the life of the word. What happens when we try to make sense of the world by using words?

*****

"As we manipulate everyday words, we forget that they are fragments of lost but eternal stories, that we are building our houses with broken pieces of sculptures and ruined statues of gods as the barbarians did. Even the soberest of our notions and categories are remote derivations of myths and ancient oral epics. Not one scrap of an idea of ours does not originate in myth, isn't transformed, mutilated, denatured mythology. The most fundamental function of the spirit is inventing fables, creating tales. The driving force of human knowledge is the conviction that at the end of its researches the sense of the world, the meaning of life, will be found (pp. 115-16)."

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In a selection from his "The Republic of Dreams," Schulz tells us how he and his friends dreamed of telling stories when they were young.

*****

"The spirit of nature was by its very essence a great storyteller. Out of its core the honeyed discourse of fables and novels, romances and epics, flowed in an irresistible stream. The whole atmosphere was absolutely stuffed full of stories. . . . We resolved to become self-sufficient, create a new life principle, establish a new age, reconstitute the world - on a small scale, to be sure, for ourselves alone, but after our own tastes and pleasures(p. 220)." From: Schulz, B. (1988). Letters and drawings of Bruno Schulz, with selected prose. (Jerzy Ficowski, Ed.; W. Arndt, Trans.) . New York: Harper & Row.

Chapter 4
Using Poems to Invoke the Storytelling Muses

As part of our 1987-88 353(310) project, Finding the WRITE Time: ABE, GED, & ESL Practitioners as Teacher-Researchers, we conducted an action-research study entitled, "Using Modern Poetry as a Reading-Writing Connection in ABE Classrooms." We encouraged our students to read and write poetry, and we still do - if, that is, it makes sense to them and they volunteer to do so. We believe that our ABE students deserve to read and share good poetry. We know that they are capable of reading, understanding, and using it.

In a section of that 1987-88 poetry study, "Poetry's Special Strength," we established our storytelling stand. Writing and reading poetry can give our students a stronger sense of their speaking selves, and it can help guide them to join or withdraw from their worlds as they wish. It can help them to realize and to take their place in society as self-respecting individuals who can give shape to their feelings and opinions. "Poetry," argues Terrence Des Pres, "is the one kind of discourse that stands on its own, empowered by ceaseless imaginative motion and the vigor of its own interior music (1986, p. 95)." Only poetical language has this self-generating power. It can give our students some very valuable equipment for living.

We offer just a few of many storytelling-connected poetry passages that have helped staff and students invoke the creative muses. The first passage comes from a new little book of poems by Linda Hogan, The Book of Medicines.

"Drought"

Once we said thunder
was the old man of sky snoring,
lightning was the old man
striking a match,
but now we only want him to weep
so we tell him our stories
in honest tongues (p. 39).

There are very real physical droughts in our lives (we have been in a record-breaking heat wave and relative dry spell all week, and it's just late spring!), and there are droughts of the spirit. We want the "old man" to refresh us with rains which restore our landscapes, both inner and outer, to good health. The back-cover blurb says, "Combining the rich imagery of her Indian heritage with the wisdom of Native female spirituality, Linda Hogan's new collection of stunningly beautiful poems is a tonic for modern times." We recommend The Book of Medicines for your ABLE library's poetry shelf.

We were intrigued by the title of another new book of poetry, Toby Olson's Unfinished Building. We have been supporting Kazemek's metaphor of Adult Basic and Literary Education as Storytelling throughout this 353 project year, and we have written about images of building. There are many things in our lives which we have to work at building. That building, as is life-long learning, for example, is always going to be unfinished in some sense. We try to build lives, careers, homes, communities, and all kinds of commerce. The title poem in this very stimulating book of poetry helps to inspire our storytelling muses. We offer these lines from the second page of this ten-page poem.

From: "Unfinished Building"

"It was the hour(before rain)of a false sun;
a jagged link of workmen
were sitting around a pile of shingles
on a new roof. One of them spoke out,
into the breeze -
torn pages from a book -
a bright voice, indistinct, and laughter
(shingles rising from the pile
and shifting, the wind stiffening);
tell us some sort of story,
of prefabricated houses
before it rains;
of nail guns, a power saw, the way the rafters
are jacked up by a crane,
the house rising
in a single day, and Jack began: . . .(p. 25)"

In our chapter on prose-poem essay writing and in other parts of this manual we stress the importance of details in good writing and storytelling. In "Here's That Rainy Day," Olson says, "Is it all memory? But, carefully . . . these are tales, and it's the details are the substance of all there is (p. 91)." Unfinished Building shows us that it is the details "that make up a life, that hold the clues to meaning (back-cover blurb)." Through our hearts and minds, we use our language tools just as the roofers use their nail guns and power saws to get on with what often seems like never-to-be-finished building.

Speaking of stories and how they are inspired, let's meditate on some words from poet Tony Hoagland's chapbook, Talking to Stay Warm. In "Better," Hoagland writes, "Some days let the hero of the story be not myself, just a fat white cloud loafing on a ridge. No other narrative than the grudging movement of a line of cottonwoods in wind; sunlight graduating into weeds." In "A Change of Plans," Hoagland says, "What we've learned is mostly not to be so smart - to believe, as hands believe, in only what they hold." We don't always have to know why and where we get our ideas and feelings about things. Some questions, Hoagland's verses tell us, have no answer, but it's good for our souls to ask them.

Have you ever watched television with the sound turned off? Now, that's a good question to get the creative juices going. The highly praised poet Howard Nemerov(he died in 1991), in his book of poetry, Trying Conclusions, explores what can happen when we do something like that. In "Soundings" he writes, "Watching the TV with the sound turned off may seem a foolish exercise enough to them that haven't tried it, and to them that won't. But as one or another philosopher may have said: 'There's nothing so stupid I can't learn from it,' and once or twice I've found its speechlessness instructive, leading on to memories and thoughts, and thence to dreams and dreamless sleep (p. 147)." Nemerov, by the way, was

Poet Laureate of the United States from 1988 to 1990. We're glad to have this book in our storytelling library.

Our last example of story-inspiring poetry comes from Erica Jong's Becoming Light. The final verse of "The Muse Who Came to Stay" brings us back to thoughts of refreshing rain for the droughts of our hearts. She ends, "I being & begin; I whistle in & out of tune. If the ending is near, I do not think of it. If the drought comes, we will make our own rain. If the muse is grounded, I will make him fly, & if he falls, I will catch him in my arms until he flies with me again (p. 225)." Thanks, Erica, with poets like you to invoke the good stories inside us, we'll have little fear of flying.

Chapter 5
Prose-Poem Essays as Storytelling Opportunities

A few years ago we wrote some pieces which seemed to be part poetry and part essay. They looked like essays. They had titles, they were frequently in multi-paragraph form, and they were usually descriptive in flavor and personal in tone. They often read like poems because they seemed to focus on short periods of time and sometimes conveyed more emotion and enthusiasm than regular expository prose essays, especially student drafts of GED practice essays. We called these short compositions prose poems then, but we have since changed the name of this very focussed kind of written storytelling to prose-poem essays because the narrative aspect fits the essay structure of real-world or work-world reader expectations. Readers expect the writer to tell a story, usually a remembered personal experience which took place over a short time span. For example, the writer might describe how he witnessed a beautiful sunset or watched a baby colt being born. Readers also expect the prose-poem essay to make a point or to be a bit philosophical at the end. Prose-poem essays have always been written, but they have been called other things and have rarely been collected or published in book form as a separate genre. As adult educators who have written and shared our own prose-poem efforts with our ABE students, we are champions of this essay type. We urge our fellow ABE practitioners to become familiar with this mainly non-fiction essay genre.

We first encountered the form in a little book, Stories and Prose Poems, which Nobel Prize winner Alexander Solzhenitsyn wrote and which Michael Glenny translated from Russian to English. This work was first published in

1971 during the time Solzhenitsyn was just starting to get a large international readership. The story or prose poem which follows is very representative of the other fifteen or so short works of its kind from this important but not very well-known little book.

"Freedom to Breathe"

A shower fell in the night and now dark clouds drift across the sky, occasionally sprinkling a fine film of rain. I stand under an apple tree in blossom and I breathe. Not only the apple tree but the grass round it glistens with moisture; words cannot describe the sweet fragrance that pervades the air. I inhale as deeply as I can, and the aroma invades my whole being; I breathe with my eyes open, I breathe with my eyes closed - I cannot say which gives me the greater pleasure.

This, I believe, is the single most precious freedom that prison takes away from us: the freedom to breathe freely, as I now can. No food on earth, no wine, not even a woman's kiss is sweeter to me than this air steeped in the fragrance of flowers, of moisture and, freshness.

No matter that this is only a tiny garden, hemmed in by five-story houses like cages in a zoo. I cease to hear the motorcycles backfiring, radios whining, the burble of loudspeakers. As long as there is fresh air to breathe under an apple tree after a shower, we may survive a little longer (Solzhenitsyn, p. 197).

This sample prose-poem essay, by the author of such works as The First Circle, Cancer Ward, and One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich, is very suitable for sharing with ABE students for several reasons. Most adult readers can appreciate having "the freedom to breathe freely." They can understand why someone might want to write, to tell a short autobiographical story, about such a meaningful moment. Most of us adult readers have experienced some kind of imprisonment of the body and/or the soul, and most of us can sense the author's joy in such a simple and brief association with one of life's priceless kinds of individual victory. We readers will probably think about Solzhenitsyn's celebration of freedom and maybe be more receptive to the next similar experience we have. We are not as likely to miss just how free but invaluable such remembered moments can be as we might have been had we never read or listened to this beautiful prose-poem essay.

Another reason why this piece connects to what we do as ABE teachers and students grows out of our mutual need to get to know more about and to feel more comfortable with one another. The reading of published prose poems or prose-poem essays and the writing and sharing of staff and student pieces is an enjoyable process which can be a source of good information about how the authors look at life and learning. Because the prose-poem essays, as are all of the other storytelling forms in our program, are the result of volunteer participation in whole-language ABE activities, any comments on prose poems such as Solzhenitsyn's will contribute to a developing sense of what this form can be. Student and staff reactions to shared prose poems give each participant bits and pieces of understanding about others know and feel about the topics and stories. As each storytelling participant picks up more information about the inner lives (thoughts and concerns) of her fellow and less-secret sharers, she begins to feel better about being part of a community of whole-language users. There are stories within stories here about both students and staff feeling better about themselves because they dared or cared to share. The prose-poem essay activity, which should extend at least over a few days, is a low-anxiety, high-yield form of storytelling.

A final reason for sharing "Freedom to Breathe" or similar published prose-poem essays in ABE settings is the GED-essay connection. It's a natural progression for students and staff to write in personal journals or writing notebooks and then to work on short autobiographical pieces such as prose-poem essays. The prose-poem essay above is how long? It is just about on the bull's-eye in terms of the average length of the GED essays that many students will be preparing to write as part of the Writing Skills Test. The 200-word length of the sample prose-poem essay, which has a short introductory paragraph (sometimes just a sentence or two), a couple main or body paragraphs, and a short summary paragraph, doesn't seem like a hard kind of writing to produce after the sharing exercises. Many student prose-poem essays are in the two-to-three-hundred-word range. With students feeling more confident about filling a blank page or even several blank pages with their own ideas and experiences, they aren't likely to feel intimidated by the 200-word challenge of the GED essay. And they know they can use the first-person pronoun(I); it's acceptable, often even preferable, for them to write about their experiences if they can work a few examples into their GED essays. GED essay readers generally give a point or two higher to essays which show or illustrate in addition to the basic statement or telling of personal opinions and positions. The writing of prose-poem essays, as extensively demonstrated in this chapter, can enhance both the competence and the confidence of our ABE student writers.

Introducing and Teaching the Prose-Poem Essay

In addition to the Solzhenitsyn prose-poem stories, there are other sources of published prose poems which we have collected and shared with our students. Some of our favorite prose poem resources are Robert Bly's What Have I Ever Lost by Dying? , Art Garfunkel's Still Water: Prose Poems , Lawrence Fixel's Truth, War, and The Dream Game: Selected Prose Poems and Parables, 1966-1990 , and a little volume that earned Charles Simic the Pulitzer Prize in 1990, The World Doesn't End. Prose-poem essays or stories are also likely to appear as sections or parts of longer essays or novels such as in the highly descriptive work of Natachee Scott Momady and James Kilgo. Our students and we have enjoyed a passage of about two-hundred words from Kilgo's essay, "Indian Givers," a first-person narrative piece which appeared in a recent issue of The Gettysburg Review. This passage depicts the successful search for a genuine stone arrowhead which the author undertook during a hunting trip. Another of our prose-poem favorites comes from Momady's novel, House Made of Dawn. The passage, also similar in length to a GED essay, describes two eagles maneuvering through mating rites. We often read this passage as an excellent example of a prose poem which shows how time can be suspended in written description.

In Gary Hoffman's Writeful , a book about writing good prose of any kind, there is a chapter entitled, "Splitting the Second: Detailing Momentary Realities," which has proven to be a wonderfully easy way of helping our students and ourselves to try writing our own prose poems. Hoffman suggests that we pick out a walking course that can be traveled within ten to twenty seconds. Walking through such a space we would normally move too quickly to notice or even care about details and subtle changes. Hoffman tells us to break this area into three smaller spaces, maybe ten to twenty square feet per area. If possible, one area should contain "something dramatic like a multi-trunk tree or an interesting stairway"(Hoffman, p. 79). Another area should be very ordinary, like an expanse of cement or carpeting. We eager writers are to force ourselves to spend at least a few minutes taking notes on each area. We should take notes on everything. The trick is to describe the scene so that our attention to details will carry our experience to our readers. In other words, we shouldn't have to tell our readers that something was beautiful or amusing. Our writing should show the beauty or amusement; we shouldn't have tell it directly. Again and again, as we read student essays, we help them to improve their writing by our doing such things as simply asking them to show us details and give us short examples of the things they have no problem telling us. Hoffman calls his workout a "full-blooded strategy," and we will show you that it does work.

Here is a student's prose-poem essay which grew out of the Hoffman exercise.

"Old Maple Tree"

An old maple tree stands forty-five feet tall and thirty-five feet wide. Its massive trunk splits three ways at the base. While most trees are barren on this November night, this one rare maple tree is overflowing with leaves. Two white floodlights and four pinkish-orange outdoor lights reflect off these leaves, creating a most brilliant display of all shades of yellow.

Just fifteen feet south of the maple tree is a basketball court, and just north of it is a small one-story brick building. Lights are on inside the building, and occasionally someone drives past me; yet, I seem to be alone in my appreciation of this wondrous tree.

Maybe those people who see it everyday take the tree for granted. Or maybe they focus on the negative things in life. Who will rake when the leaves fall?

If I take my eyes off the tree, I see the twelve-foot fence surrounding the basketball court and leading to the building. If I look below the brilliant yellow leaves, I see glistening wire strung atop the fence. If I take my mind off the tree, I remember that it stands in strong contrast to its home, the_________State Hospital, also home to some of the most violent, depressed, schizophrenic, and confused mental patients. The grounds hold many suffering people and one perfect maple tree.

This prose-poem essay is another piece in the 200-word range. It gave the author an opportunity to share his observations and feelings about a very common topic, an old tree. It gave us readers something to imagine and a few things to think about. We thought about the impressive tree, and we thought about the mental patients. The writer had written an earlier draft of this prose poem. After we read and talked about the piece, he revised it for sharing with family and friends. Just as with the GED-essay challenge and with forms of work-world writing, we encourage students to re-read their prose poem drafts and consider making some revisions. Where possible, a few interested readers, student or staff, can ask questions and give reactions that might be useful for writers who want to revise.

Another student wrote about a walk he took with his small son. It also follows the plot or story of a remembered short-lived experience.

"An Air of Adventure"

As I left my house with my son in tow, I could feel the sun on my back like a warm towel fresh from the dryer. We walked across the road and the grass-covered alley. The sky was active with fluffy white clouds making shapes and patterns as they passed across the deep blue canvas. I could hear, on the breeze, dogs barking in the distance, almost moaning a distress signal. Shortly, as we passed by, we saw and heard them rattling and clinking in the cage in which they were imprisoned.

My son Daniel left the path so he could walk through the dried brown leaves. He was amused by the sound made by the leaves under his feet. The crackling and crunching intrigued this two-year-old boy with a passion for life. Finding just the right leaf, he carried and waved it like a flag at a parade.

We continued our walk across the railroad tracks and through the underpass to the river. I heard buzzing in all directions. The insects sounded as though the grass was electrified and the current was running amok.

I sat to ponder and watch at the edge of the river. The river, with its ripples and reflections, revealed long and short lines, light and dark, as an abstract painting might look.

I could sit for hours watching the river slide ever so slowly past me. It stirs emotions and thoughts I rarely have time for.

This prose-poem essay shows us that the writer is probably a caring father and a busy but gifted observer. It, as are many prose-poem essays, is a good kind of writing for students and staff to share. Most of us readers or listeners are also parents, and many of us understand this writer's feelings about the precious and little time we have to enjoy a quiet and happy moment away from the rush and roar of our daily routines.

This writer also has a fine ear and eye for details. We could see and hear much in this short meditation. Another good teaching moment could grow out of the opening sentence, with its effective simile and thermal image on the way the sun felt on his neck. As we have emphasized, these prose-poem essays can be great confidence builders and a good way to have students publish or share their writing. We'll keep the picture of the little boy with his leaf flag in our hearts. Maybe we'll recall and put similar experiences into other prose-poem essays. Such a project might be a great way for a group or class of ABE students to produce a booklet or collection of short pieces which reveal what they see, hear, and value.

Our final example of a student-written prose-poem essay came to us after a class discussion of some of the interesting or unusual places in our lives. The student wrote about his first meeting with a different kind of friend.

"My Friend"

When I returned home from Viet Nam, I found most of my good friends were married, moved, or deep into drugs. I didn't want a confining relationship with a woman. It was hard to find girls who just wanted to be friends. It was by accident I happened upon what I call "My Best Friend."

While driving and listening to the "Golden Oldies" very late one night, much to my surprise, my motor shut off. Oh, darn, what a dumb boy! I had run out of gas. I was in the middle of nowhere. I got the gas can out and began to walk.

Before me, stretched out like a black serpent extending forever, was a large, old Amish-style wooden bridge. As I walked closer, the only light was the moon's rays coming through the windows cut in both sides in the middle of the bridge. It was dark and mysterious, but I ventured in and realized I wasn't cold anymore.

Inside, the flooring was solid, but every floor section had about a one-inch gap. This was probably to allow for expansion and contraction due to weather changes. I could see the river moving beneath my feet.

The sides of the bridge were made of one-by-six tongue and groove boards. They were attached for strength to three large arch-shaped joists. Fitted together like a well-made puzzle, they rose to the roof section. It was easy to see, as the early morning light grew stronger, that I had not been the only person to walk through this bridge.

"Steve and Mary," "Poco and Maria," "Big Mike," and many other names were written on and carved into the sides of this proud old veteran who had given me refuge from the cold. Inside I felt a comfort and peace I hadn't felt for a long time. I came to the middle of the bridge and paused for a while.

From the window I could see tall standing pines, birds rushing to feed their young, a haze left from the early morning fog, and the sun rising slowly on the horizon. The river below me moved lazily as if in no hurry to get anywhere. I felt at peace with myself. It was quiet and serene.

I have returned to this bridge many times in the past years. It is where I can be myself. No one argues with me or tries to give me advice. There is no prejudice toward my friends I bring here. Inside it is warm and dry. No one tells me what to do, what to think, how to act, or even if I'm singing in the wrong key. Someone who just listens is truly a friend.

We told this writer that his bridging-the-gap prose-poem essay had voice and integrity. It was applauded during sharing time. Most of us, we soon discovered, have special places like this that help us keep grinding along. Places near water, places on hills or mountains, places that are usually quiet and inviting are good subjects for prose-poem essays. When we share the identity and location of these special places in our lives, we have given something valuable and useful to our listeners and readers.

Does the prose-poem essay as we have described and illustrated it meet Kazemek's criteria for what happens when people tell stories? Yes, these stories are always told to other people in specific social contexts. Yes, these good stories help to connect the past with the present and often offer ideas, guidance, and direction for dealing with the future. Yes, these stories are generally modified through collaborative efforts to meet the specific demands and needs of a particular context or situation and audience. They are clear temporal instead of being timeless. Yes, these stories are useful in some sense such as in delighting or instructing. Yes, these stories make extensive use not only of the literal and empirical but also of the figurative and imaginative. They do help us see the world afresh. And, yes, these prose-poem essays or stories are holistic rather than fragmented. They engage the writer or storyteller and readers or listeners in whole, meaningful communication acts (Kazemek, p. 61). We encourage ABE practitioners to look into the sharing, writing, and publishing of prose-poem essays. As Kazemek says (p. 60), "Telling stories, narratives of our lives, is what makes us truly human."

Chapter 6
Ghost Stories in ABE/GED Social Studies?: The Ghosts of Gettysburg

It has been a pleasure to see a dream come true. That dream was shared with us about four years ago by our ABE/GED staff colleague, Meg Neiderer. As we worked closely together at The Learning Place (there were only three full-time staff then), we often talked about our hobbies and other personal and professional passions. Meg was a gifted musician with an interest in composing. We swapped stories about our writing, reading, and composing projects, and along the way we shared our love of Anne of Green Gables and other works. We read the books, we watched the television series, and we even recorded and shared videotapes when our schedules kept us from seeing a scheduled episode. We were citizens of Avonlea and Prince Edward Island. Well, as fascinating as Meg's story is, and it is a wonderful example of what can happen if a person keeps pursuing her creative visions, we will just say here that things came together - they happened and now we are talking about more than just a personal dream. Meg's talent, faith, and hard work have resulted in an audiocassette tape and much more. The ghosts of Gettysburg are now available for anyone who can afford a few dollars for the books and/or the cassette tapes. We bought the first two books and the first cassette, and now we feel we're a part of that project's history.

Ghosts of Gettysburg: Spirits, Apparitions and Haunted Places of the Battlefield was published in 1991. The author, Mark Nesbitt, worked for the National Park Service as a Ranger Historian for five years and started his own free-lance writing and research business in 1977. His other publications include Drummer Boy at Gettysburg and If the South Won

Gettysburg. Meg Neiderer, a resident of Hanover, read Mark Nesbitt's book and gradually put together the image of an audiocassette-tape version of these ghost stories. She planned to compose the keyboard background music that would accompany readings of selected stories. Meg had already met and studied with Patrick Colgan at his recording studio in the Hanover area. She worked on her music and on its applications to storytelling on her free time while she worked (and still does) as a full-time teacher/counselor in the Lincoln I.U.'s ABE programs. Nesbitt liked the idea of this collaboration, and the project picked up its tempo in 1991-92.

In 1993 Meg had picked her two readers for the recording venture. Patrick Colgan would be the male voice, and Meg literally pursued the person she wanted as the female voice, Lally Cadeau, a citizen of Canada who is better known as Janet King on the Disney Channel program "Avonlea." Lally Cadeau was intrigued by the idea and committed herself immediately to being a part of the project. Because of a work visa problem that would have delayed the recording project, Meg drove to Toronto, Canada, in order to meet Lally and do her stories there. Back in Hanover, Pennsylvania, the miracles of modern recording technology brought the whole effort to a successful conclusion.

On Saturday, April 9, 1994, we had the good fortune to drive to Gettysburg in order to meet Mark Nesbitt and Lally Cadeau. Our autographed copy of Ghosts of Gettysburg is one of our ABLE library's very special books. We are happy to report that Mark has published another book of similar stories and that a second audio tape is in the works. While she was in

Gettysburg on April 9, Lally Cadeau joined Meg and all in that recording session. We are eager to get this second cassette.

When we introduced the cassette version of Ghosts of Gettysburg to one of our storytelling groups, we did not know how these ABE/GED and Brush-Up students would react. Of course we were happy when they wanted to listen to the whole tape. There are ten stories and an introduction on this short (approximately thirty-minute) cassette. The stories have been carefully and skillfully edited to keep the pace and narration lively. The books have plenty of additional background information for anyone who wants to do some additional study on what happened in late June and early July at Gettysburg in the summer of 1863 and what has been happening with spirits and apparitions and in haunted places ever since. There is a lot of Civil War history in the books and certainly some on the tapes. We can imagine a few very interesting history lessons in GED preparation classes with Nesbitt's books and the cassette tapes being used as supplemental instructional/enrichment materials.

Below is some information that might be of interest to ABE practitioners.

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Thomas Publications publishes books about the American Colonial era, the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, and other important topics. For a complete list of titles, please write to:

Thomas Publications
P.O. Box 3031
Gettysburg, PA 17325.

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"Selected Stories from Mark Nesbitt's Ghosts of Gettysburg" was produced by Meg Neiderer (Copyright 1993, Visionary Music, Hanover, Pennsylvania, USA). We regret that we don't have a piece of Meg's new business, but we rejoice at her accomplishments. We have been writing and talking a great deal lately about Kazemek's new vision for Adult Basic and Literacy Education, but the vision in "Visionary" was Meg's gift. She had it, and we are honored to have been in a position to encourage her over the last few years.

StoryPower Lines

One of the storytelling resource books which we acquired for both staff and student reading is Eric Havelock's very scholarly 1986 publication, The Muse Learns to Write. Havelock says that the Muse of orality(performers and listeners)never became "the discarded mistress of Greece(p. 23)." The Muse learned to write while still continuing to sing.

*****

"Certain forces are at work which seem to be pushing it(orality-literacy)up to the level of conscious recognition, forcing us to take a look at ourselves on the one hand as writers and readers, yet on the other as performers and listeners, a role which is being revived for us, one might say thrust upon us, by new technologies of communication(p. 23)."

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"Even at our literate level, the average adult would prefer to take a novel to bed with him rather than a treatise, because a novel relates a story, not a series of factual statements. The narrative format invites attention because narrative is for most people the most pleasurable form that language, spoken or written, takes. Its content is not ideology but action, and those situations which action creates. Action in turn requires agents who are doing something or saying something about what they are doing, or having something done to them(pp. 75-76)."

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We are glad the Muse learned to write while it continued to sing. We need whole-language contexts and skills more than ever. From: Havelock, E. (1986). The muse learns to write: Reflections on orality and literacy from antiquity to the present. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Chapter 7
The Story Circle

Storytelling, as Kazemek points out in his article and as we instantly comprehend the meaning of this term, is first of all an act of communication between a storyteller and one or more listeners. The two participants in this exchange work together in a reciprocal process. The good storyteller never tells a story that can not be comprehended by the listener or doesn't have any significance to the listener's life and/or personality. In this way the listener influences the storyteller as in turn he/she is influenced by the story and its teller. As a storyteller you will quickly know when you have stepped outside this circle either intellectually (over or under), culturally or emotionally. You will lose the listener's attention to daydreaming, noisy interruptions or open acknowledgments of boredom. Only undivided attention of the listeners gives the storyteller the green light to go ahead and lead the way from the beginning through the middle to the end.

There is a significant psychological energy (I would like to call it magical energy, but I'm afraid of sounding flaky) within this circle. Every individual within it is listening to the same words being spoken at any moment, everyone is completing the same steps on the path of the story plot and everyone reaches the end at the same time. Within the unity of this group, though, every individual fills each word and each sentence with the meaning, pictures and associations that are very much his or her own. In this way, every participant within the process of listening proceeds to form a relation of ownership with the story. Every individual will remember the story in his or her own way. Ursula Le Guin speaks of this ongoing spread of ownership and the unity of the story circle in the following way:

"But by remembering it he had made the story his; and insofar as I have remembered it, it is mine; and now, if you like it, it's yours. In the tale, in the telling, we are all one blood. Take the tale in your teeth, then, and bite till the blood runs, hoping it's not poison; and we will all come to the end together, and even to the beginning: living as we do in the middle (Le Guin 1981, p.195)."

In a story circle we have a formation of group identity as well as the coloring of the story pictures by individual artists - think of Kazemek's vision of the democratic society.

Auditory Versus Visual "Literacy"

You might wonder about the two terms I introduced with this heading. Auditory literacy might be a more intelligible term, so I will try to explain what I mean by visual literacy first. Our western society as a whole is extremely literate when it comes to following the story line in a movie or a multitude of shows on TV. Flash-backs, a host of characters and thick intricate plots presented to us in pictures are no problem for our comprehension. Most people, except the directors, camera men and women, and whoever else is in the business, do not know the great extent of their visual literacy. Take for example the scene of a group of people walking through the woods. All is well, the camera is close to them, informing the viewer of their doing. All of a sudden though, the camera shows the group from a few steps away; a tree might get in front of the picture, and instantly we know that we are not the innocent outside viewers any longer. Now we are looking through the eyes of a perpetrator spying on his victims. A multitude of examples might be found to show the depth of our "visual literacy" which we cultivate in the course of several hours each day.

Watching a movie based on a novel or story read beforehand, many people express their dissatisfaction with the movie or notice the immense difference between the movie and their own imagination while reading. Visual presentation leaves little space for the imagination of the viewer, who is given the finished picture with nothing left to add and nothing left to own in the sense of ownership I described in the chapter on the "story circle". (Studies show that less energy is spent when watching TV than during sleep.) The results of TV culture can be seen clearly in the poverty or complete absence of descriptive passages in story writing or telling. The listener/reader of these stories might often be left with a mere carcass of "He said..." "She said..." (I will take this issue up later in on the chapter on writing: see p. 63 ff). Visual "literature" picks up and satisfies our need for stories and literature, especially if we don't know the difference due to the lack of exposure. The big difference between the two is that in TV watching we are consumers of prefabricated goods. In reading we are partners in a creation process which brings about something new, something that wasn't there before.

The meaning is neither a given external reality nor a copy of an intended reader's own world; it is something that has to be ideated by the mind of the reader. A reality that has no existence of its own can only come into being by way of ideation, and so the structure of the text sets off a sequence of mental images which lead to the text translating itself into the reader's consciousness. The actual content of these mental images will be colored by the reader's existing stock of experiences, which acts as a referential background against which the unfamiliar can be conceived and processed (Iser, 1978, p.38)."

"It has been said of Boehme that his books are like a picnic to which the author brings the word and the reader the meaning. The remark may have been intended as a sneer at Boehme, but it is an exact description of all literary art without exception (Frye: 1967, p. 427 f.)."

Sowing the Seed of Desire for Stories and Literature

In one of the story circles I asked the students about their favorite fairy tale as a child. A confusion ensued as to what could be considered a fairy tale. (The night before I had attended one of the last sessions of a seminar at the local library. The title of the seminar was "Story Healing." The participants were from a different social and educational background and older. The same question was asked here and quickly answered.) I did not interrupt the class discussion to supply an academic definition, and the outcome of the confusion was that existing Disney productions were a positive indicator in the definition. For me this was an indicator, though, that only few of the women in the group had ever been read to during childhood days, and that consequently the basic plot repertoire which a reader brings to any new literature he/she reads was very limited. Any book report done in school later, done under the pressure of grades and deadlines, would not be able to make up for the loss of relaxed listening time with a parent, grandparent, or other significant person. Only in a relaxed atmosphere in which worries about the rest of the world can be put aside for a while can friendships between literature and listeners/readers grow. Pressure to read does not create a reader; it kills his/her natural desire for any kind of literature. This is true in children and in adults.

Jim Trelease, who is and has been for a number of years one of the most sought after speakers in the field of literacy education for children, insists that the only way to have a child become a reader is through advertisement (reading to the child) and the resulting creation of desire for literature. Some of my ABE students initially had a negative reaction when asked what they thought about being read to; their argument was that listening to stories made them feel like children. Initially I tried to console their insulted adult dignity. As I thought this over more and noticed the listeners' enjoyment and the shift of attention that occurred between the tedious GED work sheets and story-reading and as I listened in on the conversations among participants after the story circle, it began to dawn on me: there is nothing wrong with feeling like a child. Most children are wide open to the world streaming in, open to new things, and this is exactly the frame of mind in which a literacy experience can take place. The original negative association with being read to dropped away quickly, and the participants were able to sit back and ride on the sound waves and the rhythm of language as it unfolded a different world. Other heavy associations with school and failure were swept under. Evaluations of the story circle toward the end of the research year were all positive, stressing the relaxation, development of new interests in literature, and, note the contrast with the initial negative statement, feeling special.

Bridging the Gap Between Comprehension and Reading Level

I have emphasized the difference between individual silent reading and oral reading in a group and have tried to touch upon some of the major points and dynamics. Some of the following has already been implied, but I would like to come back to it from a different angle. The author (writer not storyteller) brings the words to the picnic, the reader the meaning. The person who reads a story aloud doesn't just read words; he/she communicates meaning. We all know how hard it is to understand a beginning reader who is totally caught up in figuring out single words and doesn't have a clue as to what he/she is reading. This is a person who has not mastered the reading process. The reader who has mastered the "mechanics" of the reading process is able to let his/her eyes dash ahead of his/her verbalization speed which enables him/her to place appropriate stress and rhythm to the stream of words in a sentence. In so doing the oral reader presents the listener with a "pre-digested" text which is much easier to comprehend.

The storyteller, in contrast to the reader (oral or silent), knows the story as a whole, as a unit outside the time it takes to tell it from the beginning to the end. "The story is not a sequence of actions, but a whole quilt unrolled in the story-maker's mind (Stafford, 1991, p.22)." The story as a whole lies in the background of the temporal sequencing the storyteller leads his listeners through. It is this whole that keeps the parts of the story together. In the reading or the listening process the reader/listener has to work hard to form this with the help of his memory of the path that has been covered and his projections against which the following steps of the story are compared. For maximum comprehension among the story listeners, I advise the oral reader to have the story in its timeless form as an "unrolled quilt" by reading it beforehand.

Memory and projection are crucial to the comprehension of the whole. A slow reader is very much caught up in figuring out words. This slows him/her down to a speed which will put the brain to sleep, and so naturally memory and projection will be greatly impaired by the primary effort of concentrating on the "mechanics" of reading. It is very hard to develop any enjoyment and desire for literature under such circumstances and, as has been pointed out by Jim Trelease, without desire for literature, a reader cannot develop.

Speaking to the Heart and the Mind

Few of the subjects taught in schools speak to the hearts of the students as well as to their minds. Emotional development is kept outside on the fringes and imbalance in these areas are dealt with outside the classroom either with the teacher after class, with the school psychologist or in the principal's office. Now, these are not the only school-places emotions occur in; there is the kindergarten child having left his mother's side for the first time; then there might be the first-grader who is developing anxieties around math problems he cannot solve as he is expected to; then there is the odd-ball of the class, the one who doesn't fit in and is made the scapegoat for the aggressions and ridicule of the class as a whole. Then in teenage years the child goes through feelings of self-doubt or inadequacy and through experiences of romance and broken love relationships. The list could go on endlessly and anyone could identify with one or the other of the experiences just mentioned. Little of the emotional tensions, though, are addressed in the class-room. The teacher is bound to struggle against the rather strong emotional currents to get some abstract information across. Good luck!

The teacher portrayed in his struggle is far from the storyteller as Kazemek and others describe him/her. The good storyteller would pick up on the emotional as well as the intellectual current his audience is under and choose a story to meet the specific demands and needs of a particular context or situation (Kazemek 1991, p.61)."

On the one hand, literature speaks to the emotions of the reader/listener and by giving a story, we participate in this life for a while; we learn to see the world through another person's eyes and feel it through their skin. It should go without saying that this broadening of perspectives exercises our heart muscle and broadens our spectrum for emotional response to the world immediately around us and to the world as a whole. I do agree with Jim Trelease's view that this kind of education of the heart combats violence, racism, and other kinds of discrimination born of ignorance.

Possible Side Effects:

Increase in Vocabulary

Most of our language learning, as a child at least, is accomplished through listening to streams of words connected to certain contexts and to certain emotions as they find expression through the tone of voice that reaches our ears. Slowly we learn to distinguish one word from another as we assign vague meanings. Hearing the word over and over again in different contexts solidifies the meaning into a more concrete usable shape. Only at this point can the word become part of our active vocabulary (vocabulary at our disposal when we speak or write). Repeated "passive" encounters with a word in meaningful contexts increases our passive as well as our active vocabulary. Developing vocabulary with the help of work sheets, lists of synonyms and whatnot is painful in comparison with listening to stories, and it is not very effective.

Pronunciation

Listening to a story, we not only learn new vocabulary, packaged in a meaningful sentence structure and context, but we also receive the correct pronunciation of difficult words right along with it. As a reader we have to either know correct pronunciation from prior listening experience or know the often arbitrary laws of orthography. Seldom do we look up the pronunciation of a word in the dictionary or are even schooled enough to make sense of the phonetic script used.

Reading Speed

Reading speed is connected to vocabulary knowledge and the knowledge of pronunciation. Whenever we come across a word we don't know, our eyes rest on it and an interruption in the flow of the reading occurs which has a negative influence on the comprehension process. A slow reader is not able to get as much out of a story as a reader who can concentrate fully on the meaning of what he/she is reading about. Listening to stories is a wonderful bridge to cross an otherwise deep gorge or break the vicious cycle adults with limited reading abilities find themselves in. Listening to stories is a relaxing, non-threatening learning experience which is bound to create desire for literature. As a side effect of listening, a growth in vocabulary and plot repertoire occurs which in turn heightens the ability to read and comprehend. Over an extended time of regularly listening to stories the quality of attention and the length to which attention can be sustained will be strengthened. This will not only lay the groundwork for intellectual growth, but will also counteract some of western society's "attention deficit disorder." No! I'm not talking about the individuals whom we now have a diagnosis for. Our society as a whole is so complex and so "busy" with so many things at once that is quite an accomplishment for the individual if he/she is able to listen to one single text for twenty or thirty minutes without having to do anything else.

Some Suggestions for Readings in "Story Circle"

At this point I would like to share a few titles of stories I read to groups of ABE students and received good responses to. These are only suggestions; I would like to remind the reader that all stories should be selected with the group of listeners in mind. This doesn't mean you have to select something easy, something written for low literacy levels - not at all. The story should be relevant to the group and to you, the "story-teller". Your own enthusiasm in the telling will have much to do with whether the story is a success or a failure. If you don't own the story you tell, you have nothing to pass on.

Humorous stories proved to be the best beginnings of a story circle. Searching for the kind of communications which travels fastest (indication of high interest) in any given society, we might either find the joke or gossip. Both forms of stories fill us up to the point where we have to pass it on if we don't want to burst with bottled-up laughter or excitement. Roald Dahl's "Revolting Rhymes"was a big hit with every group of students. Beside the hilarious language and twisting of fairy tale plots, some of the "rhymes" (re-written popular fairy tales) assigned the heroine a new, more active role; Roald Dahl's Little Red Riding Hood is not eaten by the wolf, she takes matters into her own hands, shoots the wolf and wears his fur as a coat, and Cinderella decides to take a good jam-maker for a husband instead of the cruel prince.

On the more serious side of literature, I tried to find stories which had the capability to take the mind on journeys different from everyday life experiences. The "Collected Stories" by Paul Bowles(1981) offers a great variety in this field. Many of these stories bring in the world of fantasy, the world in which the strange and the extraordinary have a place. Most of Paul Bowles' stories leave the reader/listener with a sense of awe which will keep the mind occupied for quite some time after the reading.

Different from this kind of wonder and fantasy is the beauty of Greek myths, the plot lines of which we still encounter in well known fairy tales as well as in much of western literature and movie culture. Since these themes still supply the basic scripts with which we design our life goals or through which we look at our individual experiences, I read two of my favorite myths to groups of students: Cupid and Psyche which deals with love, trust, mistrust and jealousy among other emotions; and the myth of Demeter and Persephone which speaks to the many emotions connected to motherhood. If you wish to get a better understanding on how these myths might still be at work in our modern society, I'd like to invite you to read Care of the Soul by Thomas Moore (1992). My rationale for reading these two ancient stories grew from the many written stories I received from the participants during the time of this project. About 80% of these had the theme of giving birth, being a mother or a daughter. Almost none of these stories talked about adult love relationships.

Literature not only takes us off to fantasy land (which is a very important function, since Kansas without the Land of Oz is dreary and dusty); literature also mirrors our society in a much more powerful fashion than the newspaper or the news on TV is capable of. To get in touch with this power, I read and shared some of Nadine Gordimer's short stories, especially "Once upon a Time.'

This literature review could go on for quite some time since we(students and instructors at Project ABE)read stories twice a week for about six months. The suggestions here are only meant to start you out; it is of great importance that you as the read-aloud person have a strong impulse to share a particular story with your audience.

StoryPower Lines

It is our belief, as ABE practitioners who encourage our students to write about their lives and the lives of people they have known, that such biographical and autobiographical storytelling helps them to learn and to improve as real-world communicators. William Maxwell commented on the power of such nonfiction writing in his Not (foreword essay) which introduces his book of essays and reviews, The Outermost Dream.

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But diaries, memoirs, published correspondence, biography and autobiography - which are what I was asked to consider - do not spring from prestidigitation or require a long apprenticeship. They tell what happened - what people said and did and wore and ate and hoped for and were afraid of, and in detail after often unimaginable detail they refresh our idea of existence and hold oblivion at arm's length. Looked at broadly, what happened always has meaning, pattern, form, and authenticity. One can classify, analyze, arrange in the order of importance, and judge any or all of these things, or one can simply stand back and view the whole with wonder.

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We hope that the whole language practices which we are advocating in this 353 project manual can indeed "refresh our idea of existence and hold oblivion at arm's length."

From: Maxwell, W. (1989). The outermost dream: Essays and reviews. New York: Alfred A. Knopf(pp. viii-ix).

Chapter 8
Reading and Writing About Ourselves and Others

Students don't always come to our programs for ABE/GED or brush-up work in reading and writing. Many of our students in 1993-94 - and we served well over 300 - came to us for remediation studies in math. When they tested out at the goals/grade levels set by our funding agencies, they usually moved on to the next steps in their employment and training plans. This program year was a record-breaking year for such math brush-up referrals to I.U. 12's The Learning Place. We estimate, based on our attendance and achievement statistics through May, that as many as 30% of our ABE participants were sent here just for math basic skills remediation and brush-up studies. Most of these students had their high school diplomas or GED's; they just needed to bring up their math scores prior to admission to college, business and technical schools, or other kinds of post-secondary education and training.

We share the above information with our fellow ABE practitioners because we want you to see that our storytelling vision is not always shared passionately or embraced totally by all of the agencies which fund us and send prospective students to us. It's not that these agencies have a problem with Kazemek's metaphor of Adult Basic and Literacy Education as Storytelling; it's just that they and the students they refer to us are thinking about short-term periods of study with us. They want to bring up their general reading or math scores to 7.0 or 9.0(TABE) and get on with whatever is next on their Individual Service Strategy (ISS). It is our job to include all of these brush-up students in our larger program, especially in the course of making them feel welcome here and letting them know that they can spend some of their study time here thinking about who they are, what they really want to do with their lives, and how they might keep their long-term dreams alive. We invite these brush-up (BU) students to participate in all of our storytelling activities. The good news is that some of these BU participants, and they make up over 44% of our total ABE number, do join us on a voluntary basis.

Whether or not they are referred to us just for quick-fix or fast-food studies, we encourage our students to do some reading and writing about themselves and others. "The unexamined life is not worth living," stated the Greek philosopher Socrates over two thousand years ago. We believe that very few people today would disagree. One way to examine our lives is to write about events and people that have special significance for us. As we think about the significant events and persons in our lives, past or present, we can come to recognize our personal strengths and weaknesses and those of others, and we can begin to clarify our beliefs and values.

By reading others' autobiographical writing, including drafts by our fellow colleagues and/or students, we can help make connections among people. We often see reflections of our own experience when we read about other persons' lives, and this seeing can help us to identify and empathize with others. Sometimes we discover that other people can have very different experiences, that their lives, even in the same society, are different from ours. By reading and writing about ourselves and others we can also become more aware of how race, class, gender, age, health, region, and sexual orientation can influence all of our lives (Axelrod & Cooper, p. 65). Short journal or writing-notebook entries can sometimes lead to short (GED length or a bit longer) remembered-event or remembered-person essays which we try to help our students write if they appear to be interested or if the timing seems right.

Here is one such autobiographical essay or true story which one of our students wrote through three drafts. She wanted to share the piece with friends and family.

"My Gift from God"

I will always vividly remember the first bike I received as a child. The stunning pink color and the dainty, pretty white basket in front made me so proud to own such a fine bike. The handlebars were very high and arched, like those on a Harley-Davidson motorcycle. The bike itself seemed to have a air about it that made me feel like a princess when I rode it. There was, however, a problem with the bike: the training wheels, they absolutely had to go!

With a lot of practice on my part and a lot of time and patience on Dad's part, the training wheels finally came off. Watching him unscrew the metal attachments gave me such an eager and ecstatic feeling. Those wheels that had made me feel so secure at one time were finally off. I wouldn't need them again.

Every morning right after breakfast, I went straight to the garage to ride my bike without the "baby" training wheels. Then one afternoon my worst nightmare came true. I was riding my bike on the sidewalk, when all of a sudden both wheels of the bike became lodged in the crack between the grass and the left side of the sidewalk. I tried to get the wheels out, but it was too late. The bike came crashing down on the sidewalk with me on it, and the right side of my face was demolished.

Fortunately, my next-door neighbor saw the accident and came running over to help me. He took me to my house and explained to my grandparents, who were babysitting, what had happened. They called my parents, who were out for dinner, and told them to get home because I really needed to go to the hospital.

I remember that the right side of my face felt like it was on fire and the pain was excruciating. My mom held me in the car, while my dad rushed us to the hospital. At the emergency room a nurse escorted me to a hospital bed. She then brought over a gauze pad saturated with antiseptic to clean the wound. As she wiped my bloody and bruised cheek, I squeezed my mom's hand with each wave of pain. After the nurse took care of my wound, a doctor came in to examine the mess I had made of my cheek. The whole right side of my face was so swollen that my right eye was completely shut. The doctor said it was too early to tell if the cheekbone was broken or if there was any fracture in the cheek.

My right eye remained shut for many weeks. During this time my parents took me to countless specialists to see how much damage had really been done to my cheek. My cheekbone wasn't broken, and, as the swelling went down, the broken blood vessels disappeared. The specialist did say that my eyesight might be affected, but nothing too serious that glasses couldn't help.

After the swelling went down and the bruises healed, I found that God had left me with a little gift to remember my accident. I was fortunate not to have any bad scars, but what I was left with was a dimple that can be seen every time I smile.

Well, Nicole's narrative and very autobiographical essay did turn out to be longer than a typical GED-type essay, but it appeals to us and speaks to us because most of us have similar stories to tell about things that have happened to us. Most of us have our childhood-injury stories. Some of them don't end as well as Nicole's, but such "gifts" can make us stronger and more tolerant or understanding of others.

We have also tried to encourage our students to write about persons who have been influential or important to them. Although we certainly don't object to stories about close friends and family members, we challenge our students to write about persons who are not life-long acquaintances or members of their immediate families. We believe in the promise of self-knowledge which writing about ourselves and others can promote. By reflecting on how particular persons influenced us, either positively or negatively, we can approach an understanding of our current attitudes and feelings, beliefs, and values(Axelrod & Cooper, p. 109). Writing about significant people in our lives requires us to look at ourselves as participants in a real give-and-take relationship. Each of us can come to see how he or she has been helped or hindered by others and that each of us is not completely responsible for his or her accomplishments or failures. By writing about important persons in our lives, we often begin to see ourselves as complex rather than simple personalities.

In the following narrative essay or autobiographical piece about a remembered person, one of our students, Theresa, explores her thoughts on Herman, a co-worker of sorts who helped her to take a good look at herself.

"Herman and His Cigar"

"Herman, put that out! You know that I hate that smell!"

That's how every Sunday morning started at the deli. Herman, who was always there before anyone else, was puffing on his cigar and helping the Tastykake man unload his delivery.

Herman M. was an older man, probably about sixty-five at the time I met him. He had a face that reminded me of an elephant's skin, covered in wrinkles. He had salt and pepper hair and one of those parts on the side with the hair combed over to cover his balding head. He reminded me of George Burns.

I met Herman when I was working at a corner family-owned deli. He wasn't part of the family, and he did not get paid; he just enjoyed coming in to help. He would get to the store at 7:00 a.m., before anyone else, to help delivery men bring in the rolls, milk, and bread for the day. He never asked for anything, was never late, and was always friendly. Once in a while he would accept a box of cigars from the store owners for his services, but it was very rare. He felt that they were doing him a favor by letting him "hang out."

On Sunday mornings at 8:00 a.m. I was not always a happy person. But there, like clockwork, would be Herman, smiling and greeting the workers as we arrived.

"Why do you smoke that here?", I decided to ask one day about the cigars which were day and night hanging out of his mouth. "The smell of it makes me sick, and I tell you that every week."

"It's the only place I can," he'd say. "My wife will not allow it in the house."

Although I always got annoyed when he smoked, I thought it was cute how he obeyed his wife's wishes, doing almost anything she asked. I had met Mrs. M. only once, but from that brief meeting, I could see that she wore the pants.

"Why do you think she won't allow it in the house? Because it stinks?"

I don't know, Theresa. I feel like it is the one way I can rebel against her."

He chuckled and stared off, and I could see that he was thinking of his wife. I could see in his eyes that his love for her was very deep, the kind of love that one hopes to have as he or she grows old.

"But it's bad for you. Don't you realize that you're hurting yourself?" It sounded good to me. I did not really care if he stopped; I just wanted it away from me.

Well, as the years went on, I realized just how selfish I was being. When he said it was his only way of rebelling against his wife, he was not exaggerating. As I got to know him better, he began hinting to me about all of the things he had had to put up with from or for her over the years. She knew just how giving he was and took advantage of it. The store was a kind of separate life for him where he could really be himself.

As I reflect on the great person he was, I feel bad that I had tried to curb Herman's fantasy life. He would never think badly of me for that, however, because he enjoyed life too much to allow small things to bother him. If only everyone was like him.

It's easy to see that Theresa learned more about herself because of her friendship with Herman. The process of writing this autobiographical essay about a remembered person did help the writer to see others more compassionately and to realize that she wasn't being very sympathetic then. We enjoy the whole process of sharing such self-discovery stories. As always, it is completely voluntary. It's one of many storytelling options.

Chapter 9

Student Story Writing: Writing from a Place of Authority and Knowledge

"The stories people tell about themselves are interesting not only for the events and characters they describe but also for something in the construction of the stories themselves. How people recount their histories - what they emphasize and omit , their stance as protagonists or victims, the relationship the story establishes between teller and audience - all shape what individuals can claim of their own lives. Personal stories are not merely a way of telling someone (or oneself) about one's life; they are the means by which identities may be fashioned (Rosenwald and Ochberg 1992, p.1)."

Most of the ideas presented in the foregoing quotation have been talked about earlier in this manual. I did want to bring them back into the field of vision for this chapter on autobiographical writing, though. Here a different stage of storytelling is to be brought to the foreground again. We are going back to the place where the stories start out, to the mind of the teller and in his/her experiences of the world. In placing the chapter on story-reading/listening before story-writing, I follow the natural order for learning a language: we are listeners long before we are speakers. Through listening we first acquire the grammatical structure of sentences and the vocabulary that will be essential for the expressions of our own experiences. Through listening to stories we appropriate the "grammar" of storytelling which enables us to package these experience in a culturally intelligible form.

But, since in adult basic education we are not always teaching a foreign language and our students come to us with developed language skills, I'm not advocating a particular sequentiality for the storytelling curriculum;

storytelling, story-writing, and reading can and should go on at the same time since each separate activity reinforces the others.

Writing about our life experiences might be one of the easiest ways of overcoming writer's block, which for many people has grown into a writer's mountain during the course of their school years. Much of this writer's block was built through feelings like stress, inadequacy, and lack of knowledge on particular subjects. In these writing situations the author never spoke from the place of authority or the field of expertise. Contrary to storytelling, where the storyteller is the expert and his/her audience is a group of people who don't know, in a school setting the student/writer writes to the authority/teacher. The student makes himself vulnerable to criticism for what he writes. Story writing as proposed here holds the possibility to reverse the negative writing experiences and hand the authority back to the author.

Storytelling or story formation is a constant process taking place within the mind and between the individual and his/her social environment. Writing these stories down raises this process to a more conscious level. There are two reasons why storytelling is an effective way of overcoming writer's block. Live stories are already there; they just need to be written on paper. Most of all, though, live stories are beyond the category of right or wrong and therefore beyond criticism. I encourage you, the reader of ABE student's story writing, to refrain even from correcting spelling or grammatical errors in these texts. Assist the students in filling the stories in with appropriate questions as a listener in an audience would do: "What happened then?" "Why did she do that?" "Who was he?" "What did she look like?" "Where did this happen?" The development in this author's ability to write will be followed by improvements in spelling, grammar, and vocabulary, especially if the writing is part of a whole-language approach.

Some of the side effects to story writing, in particular if the stories have autobiographical content, are an increase of self-knowledge and self-esteem and enhancement in the ability to present one's self in resume writing and in job interviews.

Suggestions on Themes for Story Writing

Theme A:

Thinking back over your life, what would you say was the most important experience, and in what way did this particular experience shape your life.? Start building this story by sitting back and letting your thoughts wander over the time and the setting in which the story is to start out. Having found your beginning, move over the course of situations as they followed one another. Look at the contribution each of the particular incidents makes to the whole of the story. Finish your story by exploring the changes which took place over this period in your life.

Theme B:

Write a story about a dream you remember. Maybe you had this dream last night or maybe many years ago. Close your eyes and try to bring up the images that are still most vivid in your mind. Try to describe the images. Dream images are often hard to place in a sequence because they occur outside of "time" in your sleep. Find the right sequence of events: What happened first? How did the dream story continue? How did it end? You might have forgotten some of the details of the dream, or you might have been awakened by the images. Feel free to make up the rest of the dream just by imagining what could have happened next or what you would have liked to have happened at that point.

Theme C:

Write a story about your earliest memory. Some of the following questions might help you in painting a fuller picture of the situation. Use them only as suggestions. How old were you when this remembered event occurred? Who was with you when it happened? Where were you and what did you do there? Do you remember what you were wearing? Do you remember some of the thoughts that went through your head then and afterwards? What are your feelings about this experience today?

Theme D:

Write a story about a time when you feared for your life. How did the danger come about? How did you react to it? Did anybody help you, or were you able to get out of danger by yourself? Try to describe the feeling of fear when the danger was at its peak and the feeling of relief when the danger was over.

Theme E:

Who was the most important person in your life? Describe him or her by telling about this life and about what makes this person so special to you. Try to describe your relationship by describing experiences that you have gone through together.

Theme F:

Write a story about the women in your family: your grandmother, your mother, you and your sister or sisters. Tell their life stories and how they all connect. Try to see how you fit into this line of women and in which way you are different from everyone of them.

Theme G:

Imagine yourself going to different people in your circle of friends and family, asking them to tell you who you are. What would they say? Explore the different facets of your being through the eyes of the people around you.

Theme H:

Take an important period in your life and try to transform every actor in the story of this time into a fairy tale character. For example: Women who had a negative influence, you may want to turn into witches, or if they were of positive influence you may promote them to being fairy godmothers giving you all you needed to succeed with your task. Let your imagination have the upper hand and just follow the voices of enchantment in making up a fairy tale

Theme I:

Please bring some photographs of yourself. Create a story around a particular picture, using the picture as a center. Describe what you see in the picture in great detail so that a person reading the story does not need the picture to get a full impression of the moment in time the photograph captured. If you don't remember the circumstances under which the picture was taken, feel free to make them up. Imagination is often better than the real thing!

The themes given above have proven helpful in getting people started in writing stories and shaping or reshaping their memories and reflections on who they are. In making up these themes, I tried to be a story listener, perpetuating the telling with a multitude of questions. As I received "answers" in the form of wonderful stories, each different from the next, each letting me participate in a part of a person's life, special connections grew, and my questioning became more individualized.

Each new story landing on my desk was a very special gift.

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Excerpts from Reading for the Plot by Peter Brooks: "Design and Intention in Narrative"

"Our lives are ceaselessly intertwined with narrative, with the stories we tell and hear told, those we dream or imagine or would like to tell, all of which are reworked in that story of our lives that we narrate to ourselves in an episodic, sometimes semi-conscious, but virtually uninterrupted monologue. We live immersed in narrative, recounting and reassessing the meaning of our past actions, anticipating the outcome of our future projects, situating ourselves at the intersection of several stories not yet completed. The narrative impulse is as old as our oldest literature: myth and folk tale appear to be stories we recount in order to explain and understand where no other form of explanation will work. The desire and the competence to tell stories also reach back to an early stage in an individual's development, to about the age of three, when a child begins to show the ability to put together a narrative in coherent fashion and especially the capacity to recognize narratives, to judge their well-formedness. Children quickly become virtual Aristotelians, insisting upon any storyteller's observation of the 'rules,' upon proper beginnings, middles, and particularly ends. Narrative may be a special ability or competence that we learn, a certain subset of the general language code which, when mastered, allow us to summarize and retransmit narratives in other words and other languages, to transfer them into other media while remaining recognizably faithful to the original narrative structure and message.

Narrative in fact seems to hold a special place among literary forms- as something more than a conventional 'genre' - because of its potential for summary and retransmission: The fact that we can still recognize 'the story' even when its medium has been considerably changed. This characteristic of narrative has led some theorists to suppose that it is itself a language, with its own code and its own rules for forming messages from the code, a hypothesis that probably does not hold up to inspection because narrative appears always to depend on some other language code in the creation of its meanings. But it does need to be considered as an operation important to all of our lives. When we 'tell a story,' there tends to be a shift in the register of our voices, enclosing and setting of the narrative almost in the manner of the traditional 'once upon a time' and 'they lived happily ever after;' narrative demarcates, encloses, establishes limits, orders.(pp.3-4)."

"...We sense that there ought to be a correspondence between literary and psychic dynamics, since to an important degree we define and construct our sense of self through our fictions, within the constraints of a transindividual symbolic order(Brooks, p.36)."

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"Less and less frequently do we encounter people with the ability to tell a tale properly. More and more often there is embarrassment all around when the wish to hear a story is expressed. It is as if something that seemed inalienable to us , the securest among our possessions, were taken from us: the ability to exchange experiences.

"One reason for this phenomenon is obvious: experience has fallen in value (Walter Benjamin: "The Storyteller," in: Illuminations, p.83-84)."

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Students' Stories(with very little editing)

Crystal L.S. 5/19/94

First Story

The Little Girl Under the Tree

Once upon a time in the land of So-familiar there lived a little girl. She lived in a house with a big tree in the yard.

She lived with her mother and two tattletale sisters in the house with the big tree in the yard. To the people around her the little girl seemed happy. And she was, when her chest did not burn or she wasn't fighting an attack from one of her ailments. The little girl spent her days in the shade of the big tree, watched carefully by her mother. Her every movement was reported to her mother by her two tattletale sisters. She longed to be able to run and play like the other children, but she knew that if she ran her lungs would burn and scream for air. Her heart was weak and couldn't stand the strain, and she knew that such activity would send her to the Ogre in the sterile castle who she lived in constant fear of.

Her world revolved around dreams of running in the sun, playing jump rope with the other little girls and doing all of the things that she would never be allowed to do. Her days and reality were filled with pills, potions, and inhalers given to her by the Ogre in the Sterile Castle. Her mind was full of things to do. She had her books and dolls and every day she played with them on her blanket.

Every so often she'd be reluctantly taken to the Ogre in the "Sterile Castle" whom she both hated and feared. She didn't like the cold "things" he poked her with. She didn't like the sound that the "Breath Monster" made or the beeping of the "Heart Checking Monster". And worst of all, it was the curse of that Ogre that kept her on the blanket in the shade, his decree that made the other children tease her. Oh how he hated him and his "Sterile Castle."

As time passed and seasons changed, the little girl sat silently and watched the rest of the world pass her by. She grew envious of the children with the good lungs and strong hearts. She longed to fit into their world, for she started to outgrow the dolls that used to be her only friends. She still had dreams, but she knew if she tried to fit in with the other children like in her dreams, she'd be rushed to the Ogre in the "Sterile Castle" with his monsters and potions and cold things.

One day after a trip to the "Sterile Castle," the little girl decided that she'd become normal like the other children or she'd die trying. She put away all her books about magic and fantasy for she (had) outgrown them anyway. She started reading other kinds of books, the ones her mother kept for an emergency. She affectionately called them her ammunition to fight the Ogre that she despised so much.

With the passing of time she started to use her ammunition against the Ogre. Little by little she stopped taking the Ogre's potions and pills. And when her mother and her two tattletale sisters weren't watching she'd sneak away from her worn blanket in the shade to be with the other kids. Only for short periods of time at first. Then she'd drag herself back to the blanket exhausted.

This became a daily ritual. Day after day she practiced and with time the frail shell of a little girl wasn't so frail anymore. She could stay away from her blanket for longer and longer periods of time without the elephant sitting on her chest.

Soon she was gone from her blanket so much that her two tattletale sisters had to come and look for her and escort her back to her blanket, only to find her gone again in a few minutes.

With practice and time she found she could keep up with kids her own age, the ones that used to tease her, and she found that she had made friends with those children. Some more time passed, and she noticed her mother had stopped sending the two tattletale sisters after her. And people noticed the change in the little girl under the tree.

One day she was out playing a game of tag when her mother called her inside to shower and change. For it was time once again for her to make the trip up to the "Sterile Castle." Reluctantly the little girl obeyed her mother for she had a feeling it would be the last time for a long time that she would be poked by the cold things. And she felt sure that she had enough practice with her ammunition to beat the Breath Monster and the Ogre. She had faith that she would finally be freed from the curse of the Ogre.

Once inside of the "Sterile Castle," the Ogre went trough his ritual of torment. Reaching deep down inside her, she summoned every ounce of her inner courage. She had never spoken to the Ogre before, but today she had to. At first her voice was no more than a whisper, but she found the strength to tell the Ogre that she could run and play without her lungs burning, no chest pain, and no wheezing. She had defied the Ogre. She boldly told him how she ran and jumped. How she refused to take his potions or pills. How she felt that his potions and pills were keeping her from being normal, they kept her from running and playing. She told him how when she ran, her chest didn't hurt, her lungs didn't burn, that there was no pain in her chest and she didn't pass out.

The Ogre listened intently as the little girl bravely declared her feelings of good health. Without saying a word, he spun around and walked out of the room. When he came back in, a funny thing happened. It was like the little girl could see things in a different way. Standing in front of her was no longer an Ogre but a doctor. The "Sterile Castle" became a hospital.

Now, many years later, the frail shell of the little girl grew into a normal mother of four, still slightly troubled with the ailments but yet not afraid to run with an outside chance, daring to pay all costs to be normal and, yes, she still sees the doctor as an Ogre sometimes. But she never loses sight of the image of "the little girl under the tree."

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Dana D.

First Prose Poem

"Da, Da, Da, Da."

I say the word but I don't know what it means.
My mommy wants me to say "Ma Ma,"
But somehow "Da Da" comes pouring out.
Sadness comes over mommie's face.
I wish I could make it better.
I love going to the place
where other things that look like me
are all together.
I think my mommy calls them kids.
It is colorful all around.
Everybody is having such a good time.
My mommy calls it the park.
I really like those big people with their kids.
Now I know they are not mommies,
But my mommy never told me what they are.

They look like fun. I wish I had one.

Well, it must be nap time.

Mommy is getting that warm thing to put me on.

I love my mommy; she takes care of me.

Ah, this feels good. I am pretty sleepy.

How does she know me so well?

My eyes are very heavy; I can't keep them open.

Oh well, now I can dream of having one of those other kinds of mommies.

My second mom will have blond hair and blue eyes.

For some reason, I remember the color blue.

The hands are big...so I'm sure not to fall.

I want the arms to be strong, so I'll feel safe.

Hair on the chest would run smoothly through my hands.

The voice will have to be firm, yet gentle.

I would know I'm loved.

Me and my second mom would go places together.

Maybe even the park.

It will be my turn to show off my second mommy.

All the other kids will want to be me.

Then at nap time, instead of a warm thing,

my second mom will hold me tight.

Dream land will be just a little bit warmer.

What? I'm not ready to get up.

I'm still tired.

But wait a minute, woah, who is that?

You know, I think I saw this person before.

Blond hair, blue eyes, and strong looking hands.

What's this, smiling at me?

This person seems to like me.

Now the arms are reaching out for me.

I look at my mom to see what to do.

She says, "This is your Da Da."

My da da. Wow, I got a da da.

"Look everybody! My second mommy is a da da."

I never thought my dream would come true.

*****

Alma DJ: A Short Biography

She was born in Puerto Rico as the last of six children. Her mother died of cancer when Alma was three years old and the children were split up among the relatives. Alma spent some years with an aunt in Puerto Rico and was then sent to live with her father in the U.S. at the age of eleven. Father proved not to be a good caretaker and she quit school after ___ grade. Alma had her first child at the age of ___. Alma is ambitious, loves to work, and wants to get a job to enable her to make a living on her own.

Alma's Stories

First Story 3/2/94

I will call this person Carmita. She started on Jan. 2, 1994 at the Navy.

First thing they did was cut her hair so short. She was very upset, but learned to accept it. She thought that it was going to be an easy task but soon learned to adjust to military life. They get her up at 4:30 a.m., must be ready in 5 minutes and begin her day with exercises, chores, and later on in the day she must go to school. She calls home often. I encourage her, but she still is looking forward to graduation so that she can come home.

Second Story 3/8/94
(Dream theme)

Last night I dreamed that we were doing the drama, and everybody was laughing and having a good time. We were trying to be serious, but it was impossible. When I woke up, I prayed that I don't make a mess out (of) the drama the night of the performance.

Third Story 3/8/94

My experience in my life began when I decided to go back to school to get my G.E.D. At first I thought to myself, that because of my age, I would not be able to reach my goal, but as I began to come to classes, I realized that I wasn't so bad after all. I'm learning to work independently. I try to come to class early so that I can learn to do different tasks. Our class is very special, because even though I'm the "Senior Citizen" of our group, I enjoy being there with them, we are all there for one thing at the moment, and that is to get our G.E.D. so that we can have a brighter future for our children, so that they will not lack anything that they might need for their future, like an education.

Fourth Story 3/8/94

My daughter Carmita went to the Navy on Jan. 3, 1994, and I told her that I would attend her graduation no matter what obstacles I would have to face. As her graduation date got near, I started to get worried. How was I going to get there? Well, I started to ask the Lord for his guidance and even though he had everything in control, I was still worried because sometimes I have trouble depending on the Lord. Well, I (made) ticket reservations, and a friend of mine told me to cancel my tickets because we were going to drive to Orlando, Florida, but he called and backed out at the last minute. I only had three hundred dollars to go, get a hotel, plus meals. At the last minute I decided to leave my son Luis with my older son (Papo). I finally left to Florida. I prayed again and asked him to guide and be with me all the way to Florida. I got there 24 hours later and they had misplaced my suitcase. I was worried. I went to the Naval Base to see my daughter. They said it was too early. I registered to see her at 5:00 p.m. I went, got a hotel room, and ate and at 4:00 a man that worked at the Navy picked us (a friend and her little son) up at the hotel lobby and took us to the Naval Base. My daughter's company was marching and she was looking for me, but it was so much a big crowd (it was too big a crowd), she could not find me. I grab her. She thought it was the crowd grabbing her. When she finally looked, she saw me and started to cry! She was with me from 5:00 to 8:00 that evening. I went back to the hotel and went back on Friday morning for her graduation. I was so proud of her. The ceremony was beautiful. We had a picnic lunch, and she had to go to classes and I went back to the hotel. Later that day I went back to the base, picked her up and we went to a street fair. We had dinner and had a lot of fun. About 10:30 p.m. we said good-bye and she went back to the base and I went back to the hotel. The next day I was on my way back home. While sitting in the bus, I thanked the Lord for allowing me to be with my daughter and share one of many goals reached.

Fifth Story 4/26/94
Poor Little Rich Girl

Once upon a time there was a poor little rich girl. She was rich because she had many talents. She was still a girl because she had not fully realized her power. One day she set out on a quest to give up her poverty, gain her riches and claim her power. So she boarded a train, not knowing her destination. Her first stop was a town, that (in which) no one would care about anyone, everyone sat in their homes just minding their own business. But this little girl wanted to change the atmosphere; she just started to walk up and down the street singing a lovely soft song, and even though she was very hungry, she kept singing. Soon she attracted a crowd. The people were so happy to hear a little girl sing so lovely. A lady approached her and invited her to dine with her family. Later that evening the little girl started singing once again. The town's people gathered and started to notice each other. They started mingling, getting acquainted, and soon that town was alive, cheerful and neighbors started to get together for gatherings, picnics or just a chat. Thanks for the little girl with a lovely voice.

Sixth Story 4/28/94
A Soldier's Dream

Once upon a time there was a soldier who came home from the war and couldn't stop fighting. He was very confused. Nobody else seemed still at war but him, and the enemies he chose to battle were invisible. After a while he decided to become a soldier of gentleness because he realized that no one was giving him the attention that he yearned (for). This special soldier had been at war, facing a different battle each day. One day he woke up with a deep fear, knowing something terrible was about to happen. He got dressed and received his orders to go out to combat the enemy. And soon he found himself proud to be serving his country, but all of a sudden there was a loud noise. It was a bomb. It exploded and got him in the leg. He thought he was about to die. He was soon rushed to the hospital. His leg was amputated. After he woke up from the anaesthesia, he found himself lost , confused, and alone. He felt that he had let his country down. But to his surprise the commander himself paid him a visit to decorate him with many outstanding medals. After his recovery, the soldier was released from the hospital and (the) service. He went home, hoping and looking forward to serving his country once again, even though he blocked the amputated leg out of his thoughts. The soldier was so confused that he went back to reenlist.

Chapter 10
During and After Storytelling: A General Renewal of Enthusiasm

Several years ago I was teaching an evening GED class at Eastern York County High School (PA) for I.U. 12's public ABE program. I and most of my fifteen or so students were busy adults who had full-time jobs (we consider parent homemakers of either sex as having full-time jobs) and other enthusiasms. That year I was also working on my first 353 project, called a 310 project then. That project, The Write-for-Life Project, which I first conceived in 1982-83 because I was bothered by the fact that GED candidates were able to pass a Writing Skills Test without having to do any writing, was my first in-depth venture into whole-language work with adults. That class at Eastern was my experimental group. What we did there for a few hours twice a week was examine the five GED subject areas, do class exercises in English(Writing Skills), math, and reading, talk about our lives - our work, our families, our hobbies, our community concerns - and, as often as we could, do some in-class and out-of-class writing for personal and public purposes. What I didn't realize at the time was that we were in essence using a storytelling approach to ABE/GED instruction.

One night, for example, I was presenting the Pythagorean theorem during a unit of instruction in GED math. I told the class a story about how my teacher in eighth grade took us outside to solve real-world geometry problems. He asked us to use " 'a' squared plus 'b' squared equals 'c' squared" to determine the height of the flagpole after we had also calculated the hypotenuse made by the imaginary line from the top of the flagpole to the end of its shadow. We were to use a similar-triangles approach by first measuring the three sides of a right triangle made by placing a yardstick at a ninety-degree angle to the ground. Once we had determined the length of the smaller triangle's three sides, we could then use similar-and-congruent-triangle methods and/or the Pythagorean theorem to determine the height of the flagpole without climbing to its top with a measuring tape. Well, a student on another team had apparently missed the lesson on using similar triangles because our building principal spotted him halfway up the flagpole. He came down safely and quickly, and our outside math class was over for the day. We went back to class with our embarrassed teacher. We did, however, learn a lot about math from that teacher. He showed us that math was a real-world tool that we could actually use in our out-of-school lives.

One of my GED students raised his hand and told us how he used the Pythagorean theorem to make sure the bases of his construction and painting ladders were a safe distance from the vertical surfaces (walls) they were leaning against. He showed us how he calculated this "side" of the right triangle. The ladder was the hypotenuse. What he said with a chuckle was that he hadn't known this math-at-work solution had such a fancy name, the Pythagorean theorem. I'm sure most of us will remember that math lesson. The teacher told a story, and then a student told a story about solving a geometry or real-life problem.

Later that semester a student took me much deeper into solid geometry than I had ever gone in a GED class. We talked about coiled pipes and volume, and after we had exchanged more information on lengths and diameters, for example, we were able to come up with an answer which later proved to be close enough to help the student solve a problem at work. That was a two-week problem. We both had to do some homework before we could solve the problem. The student's **story** or explanation of the problem was crucial to our setting up the steps toward solution. We walk away from such ABE experiences feeling better about ourselves.

In Crossing Open Ground, at the beginning of his chapter, "Landscape and Narrative," nature writer Barry Lopez describes a time when he sat among a group of men listening to hunting stories. He was particularly interested in some incidents involving wolverine because he had found this animal to be such an intense or fierce creature. He listened carefully to those stories and took pleasure in the detail surrounding them.

"The story I remember most (Lopez, pp. 62-63)vividly was about a man hunting a wolverine from a snow machine in the spring. He followed the animal's tracks for several miles over rolling tundra in a certain valley. Soon he caught sight of a dark spot on the crest of a hill - the wolverine pausing to look back. The hunter was catching up, but each time he came over a rise the wolverine was looking back from the next rise, just out of range. The hunter topped one more rise and met the wolverine bounding toward him. Before he could pull his rifle from its scabbard the wolverine flew across the engine cowl and the windshield, hitting him square in the chest. The hunter scrambled his arms wildly, trying to get the wolverine out of his lap, and fell over as he did so. The wolverine jumped clear as the snow machine rolled over, and fixed the man with a stare. He had not bitten, not even scratched the man. Then the wolverine walked away. The man thought of reaching for the gun, but no, he did not."

Lopez notes that when the stories were over and he was leaving the host's home with four or five other listeners, the landscape seemed more alive because of the stories (p. 63). He felt exhilaration. The normal tasks which lay ahead of him he now looked forward to doing with pleasure. The stories had "renewed in me a sense of the purpose of my life(p.63)."

Sometimes, after an event such as a snowstorm or after something exciting has happened to one of us, student or staff, we swap little stories about how we experienced or survived this or that adventure. We can understand what Lopez means when he writes about the hard-to-explain renewal of enthusiasm after storytelling. This feeling, we know, is familiar to many people.

In Donald Hall's fairly long (eight pages) narrative poem, "The Night of the Day," recently published in the Spring 1994 issue of The Gettysburg Review, we enjoyed a story about the time seven heifers appeared on the road outside his country home. No one knew who owned the cows, and there was quite a lot of excitement for a few hours as a story circle was formed.

> "Then Peg Smith's new Ford braked at the margin
> of the road with her flashers flashing
> and she heaved uphill to join us. Just behind,
> her deputy Ned Buttrey parked his Plymouth van,
> sparking another cadence, and approached

grinning with one tooth; Ned looked back
at Route 4's shoulder blinking on-and-off, said,
'Looks like quite some party,' and laughed,
joining our circle.
We gossiped together,
mostly ignoring the heifers, which mostly
ignored us back as they moseyed to browse (p. 213)."

Still, Hall relates, no one could figure out to whom the heifers belonged. He went back to his house and made some phone calls.

"Walking back, I heard the sound of stories
in the laugh that rose abruptly from the circle,
from pale faces looming over sweaters and down jackets
beside the barn - a laugh that ended a story
with gaiety's flare, like a wooden match striking
gold inside a stove. I told them, 'They're not Bill's.
Bill said try Willy.' Nobody had an idea; and nobody
fretted. Then somebody started to tell the one
about the bull that butted the vet bringing syringes.
Well, I fretted: 'What do I do with them?'
Sherm offered: 'Feed them poems. They tell
you've got extra. They tell you keep fifty bales
of old poems stacked in the hayloft (p. 214).'

Well, they finally determined that Willy DeLord, ten miles away, was the cows' owner. With Willy on his way, Hall tells us, he and his wife could have kept the heifers in place, but nobody wanted this story-swapping party to end.

> "; we all felt giddy,
> the way children do when something unexpected
> keeps them up past bedtime - arrival without
> notice of an uproarious aunt and uncle, or a fire
> or a storm - and bedtime rules are broken,
> all rules are broken, as they are in paradise (p. 215)."

Finally, after several hours, after all of the friends and neighbors have gone home and the heifers are being walked back to their home, Hall is alone in his house.

> "Then I had the night
> to myself: No moon, no stars, no trucks, no heifers,
> no friends, no stories, and no sound: Only dark fields
> and darker road, black on black, and I was alive, sleepy,
> not wanting to sleep, happy, amazed by happiness (p. 218)."

*****

What happens when we engage in genuine storytelling activities, whether at work, in an ABE setting, or in family or neighborhood circles? We have all experienced what Barry Lopez calls "an inexplicable renewal of enthusiasm after storytelling (p. 63)." What happens seems to be in complete harmony with the spirit behind Francis Kazemek's view of how we might approach adult literacy education. "Adult literacy education perceived metaphorically as an imaginative, social, and communal process of storytelling allows us to begin thinking seriously about the development of what Dewey calls 'individual-social' human beings.' Together, such human beings constitute communities that are committed to the past, present, and future well-being and learning of all their members(p. 63)." We agree with Kazemek's conclusion that we ABE practitioners and the public should settle for nothing less. Again and again during this 1993-94 project year we have experienced this renewal of enthusiasm that comes to people who are willing to share parts of their lives with one another.

* * * *

Some Encouraging Signs: Are we Telling Stories?
(A Look at Kazemek's Thoughts on Evaluation)

Kazemek's Tenth Principle of his "General Principles of Holistic (Whole) Language Education" states,"Assessment and evaluation of whole language education must itself be holistic." We cannot follow the other nine principles and then attempt to assess an adult's growth by using some standardized or criterion-referenced test which measures isolated, partial, or purposeless language skills. "To do so," Kazemek asserts, "would be like evaluating the quality of an apple by using the standards typically applied to oranges (1989, p. 4)."

Although we will address the matter of evaluation more fully in our project report, we want to declare with great vigor to anyone interested that we know our storytelling year was a good one. There were lots of positives about what we and our students did on a volunteer basis in 1993-94. Story Circles were established, stories were told and read, and many of the students and, yes, even a few of the ABE staff wrote fiction and nonfiction pieces and shared them during storytelling sessions. The best evidence we have that some of our storytelling activities were successful is in the ongoing sharing. As this manual was being completed, students and staff were not concerned about the official end of the 353 funding year. They knew that the storytelling opportunities were still in place and that funding was not a concern. The work of the project will go on because we have our little storytelling library, primarily an open-entry, open-exit student flow to keep new blood (and stories) coming through, and the enthusiastic support of our non-353-funded ABE colleagues. We feel good about the sharing we've done because we know our students have come, have told their stories, and have enjoyed the whole experience.

StoryPower Lines

Elie Wiesel, in his piece entitled, "When Memory Brings People Together," answers one of our questions about the importance of storytelling in our lives. Sometimes it isn't easy or pleasant to know about the past and want to remember it, but there are good reasons why we should. Please think about the sentence in the last paragraph which begins with the word, "Naturally."

*****

"Memory" is the key word. To remember is to create links between past and present, between past and future. To remember is to affirm man's faith in humanity and to convey meaning on our fleeting endeavors. The aim of memory is to restore its dignity to justice.

It is in the name of memory that I address myself to Germany's youth. "Remember" is the commandment that dominates the life of young Jews today; let it dominate yours as well. Challenged by memory, you could move forward. Opposed to memory, you are bound to remain eternally opposed to us and to all we stand for.

Memory means to live in more than one world, to be tolerant and understanding with one another, to accept the mystery inherent in questions and the suspicion linked to answers. Naturally, it can also bring forth tensions and conflicts, but they can then be transformed into culture, art, education, spiritual inquiry, the quest for justice. Without memory, mankind's image of itself would be impoverished.

From: Wiesel, E.(1990). From the kingdom of memory: Reminiscences. New York: Summit Books (pp. 194-195).

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StoryPower Lines

Cynthia Ozick, in her book of essays, Metaphor & Memory, lends powerful intellectual support to our presentation and interpretation of Francis Kazemek's metaphor of Adult Basic and Literacy Education as Storytelling.

*****

"Metaphor . . . is also a priest of interpretation; but what it interprets is memory. Metaphor is compelled to press hard on language and storytelling; it inhabits language at its most concrete. As the shocking extension of the unknown into our most intimate, most feeling, most private selves, metaphor is the enemy of abstraction . . . it is the way of metaphor to transform memory into a principle of continuity. By 'continuity' I mean nothing less than literary seriousness, which is unquestionably a branch of life-seriousness (p. 282)."

Ozick goes on to describe the transforming effect of memory, of turning metaphoric.

"Through metaphor, the past has the capacity to imagine us, and we it. Through metaphorical concentration, doctors can imagine what it is to be their patients. Those who have no pain can imagine those who suffer. Those at the center can imagine what it is to be outside. The strong can imagine the weak. Illuminated lives can imagine the dark. Poets in their twilight can imagine the borders of stellar fire. We strangers can imagine the familiar hears of strangers (p. 283)."

We highly recommend this book of essays to our ABE colleagues and friends, especially the title essay, "Metaphor & Memory." Ozick tells us that metaphor "relies on what has been experienced before; it transforms the strange into the familiar . . . Metaphor overwhelmingly attaches to the house of language (pp. 280-281)."

From: Ozick, C. (1989). Metaphor and memory: Essays. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

APPENDIX

"IN IGNORANCE TO VIEW A SMALL PORTION AND THINK THAT ALL": THE FALSE PROMISE OF JOB LITERACY

Francis E. Kazemek
Eastern Washington University, Cheney, Washington

> . . . *To perplex youth in their outgoings & to bind to labours in Albion*
> *Of day & night the myriads of eternity: that they may grind*
> *And polish brass & iron hour after hour, laborious tasks,*
> *Kept ignorant of its use: that they might spend the days of wisdom*
> *In sorrowful drudgery to obtain a scanty pittance of bread,*
> *In ignorance to view a small portion & think that All,*
> *And call it Demonstration, blind to all the simple rules of life*
> (Blake, 1966, p. 700)

This essay is about visions of literacy and literacy education: those that see only a small portion and think it is all, and other visions that are wider, richer, and sustained by the imagination and its myriad possibilities. My purpose is to explore what literacy is *for*. Any vision of literacy, however narrow or expansive, includes underlying beliefs about why people should know how to read and write. I argue against the current and widespread public perception of literacy and adult literacy education as primarily, if not exclusively, work-related. Such a vision is inadequate and ultimately dangerous in a democratic society. I maintain that the lamentations, exhortations, and dire warnings of politicians, employers, educators, and others concerning illiteracy and the future economic health of our nation are largely uninformed, misdirected, or self-serving. To be sure, there are many kinds of literacy (including specific job literacies) based upon different functions and uses. But the ultimate reason for literacy, and for adult literacy education, is to foster the continuous reconstruction of experience by individuals, and thus the continuous reconstruction of society (Dewey, 1916, 1948). A perspective which sees literacy only or primarily in job-related terms is too limiting, too mean, for a participatory democracy.

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people still refused to treat blacks and whites equally. Rosa Parks, a black woman who lived in Montgomery in 1955, had to deal with this problem.

One evening, Rosa Parks was coming home from work, on a Montgomery city bus. She had been working hard all day at her job in a downtown department store. Rosa was quite tired. She took a seat toward the back of the bus, where black passengers normally sat. The bus began to fill quickly. As whites got on, they took what seats there were, and soon the bus was full.

Rosa realized that some of the blacks would be asked to give up their seats and move to the back of the bus. They would be asked to stand so that white passengers could sit. She felt that this was unfair. Why should she have to move?

Suddenly the driver turned and asked her, and some other blacks, to move to the rear of the bus. Rosa argued with the driver, but he still insisted that she leave her seat and stand in the back. Rosa paused. She had to make a decision quickly. Should she give up her seat or remain seated?

What would you have done if you had been Rosa Parks? What do you think she did?

Rosa Parks made her choice. She decided to remain seated on the bus. Her action led to the Montgomery Bus Boycott — and eventually, to a Supreme Court ruling against the separation of blacks and whites on all buses. (Kownslar & Fielder, 1976, p. 301; this is a "modern" series for upper elementary and junior high students based on inquiry and *is* considered too liberal for many school districts)

Dr. King gained nationwide fame in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955. At that time blacks had to sit in the back of public buses. But one day a quiet woman named Rosa Parks decided to sit in the "whites only" part of the bus. She was arrested. Dr. King led a boycott of Montgomery buses to protest her arrest. People who supported Dr. King would not use the buses until anyone could sit wherever she or he pleased. The boycott worked. (Helmus, Arnsdorf, Toppin, & Pounds, 1984, p. 248; this is an upper elementary text)

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Job Literacy and Democratic Illiteracy

Why should people who don't read and write very well enroll in programs which are designed to help them improve these abilities? According to most governmental, business, and educational studies and reports the answer is unequivocal: to get, keep, or retain for a job. The *Jump Start* report (upon which several literacy bills are based, such as those introduced by Senator Paul Simon and Representative Tom Sawyer) contends that "we must build an emphasis on workforce literacy if the nation is to meet the economic and social challenges of the years to come" (Chisman, 1989, p. v). The Department of Labor's "Workforce 2000" study presents a grim picture of our nation's economic health if the literacy abilities of the future workforce (one which will be much smaller than today's and will include many minority members) are not dramatically improved (Joint Economic Committee, 1988). Adult literacy educators, researchers, program developers, and publishers of adult basic education materials have similarly heeded the call to get our illiterates "skilled" and into jobs. It is impossible to pick up a professional journal without reading about "functional" or "workplace" literacy or seeing advertisements for workplace literacy materials. The testimony of experts before Congress a few years ago centered largely on the relationship between literacy and work (*Illiteracy in America*, 1986).

How can anyone criticize attempts to help people develop those literacy abilities which will improve their chances of employment? Doing so is tantamount to being against the side of the angels. Yet this almost single-minded emphasis on literacy *training* for employment is in the final analysis not designed to further the interests of those with limited reading and writing abilities. Rather, it is designed to advance the interests of certain elite groups in society, whether they be governmental, corporate, or class-based. As such, the current literacy training-for-job focus is ultimately dangerous to the democratic well-being of our nation.

Andrew Sledd has argued forcefully that before we begin to explore the issues relating to literacy and literacy education we must ask what literacy is for. "Pieties about Literacy with a capital L ought to be scrutinized: Which literacy? Whose literacy? Literacy for what? How?" (Sledd, 1988, p. 499). Literacy education cannot be separated from the larger social context in which it occurs or from the important societal issues of which it is one part. But this is what the literacy-as-job-training advocates attempt to do. They create a partial reality from their particular (and often self-serving) perspective and they present this as the reality in which we should function. For example, governmental and corporate leaders continue to tell the public that the reason many poor people don't have jobs is that they are illiterate. It would take an economic and social naif, however, to believe that if all poor people

were able to read and write proficiently tomorrow, poverty would suddenly end. Thus, the partial reality created by the literacy-as-job-training advocates continues to justify an unjust social and economic system. The onus for not having a job is placed upon the poor and not upon an economic and social system which makes them expendable.

Literacy education in the United States is a class issue. The vast majority of people who cannot read and write very well are poor, and many are minorities (Hunter & Harman, 1979). All of the public discourse concerning illiteracy as something which cuts across class lines — for example, the Project Literacy U.S. (PLUS) television programs and the Coalition for Literacy's advertisements — is simply a red herring to distract us from the real issues and problems. Some middle-class businesspersons may have difficulty reading and writing, but they are certainly the rare exception, not the rule. Moreover, as Arlene Fingeret (1983) has shown us, if these businesspersons are successful they have developed reciprocal relationships with others, secretaries, for example, who do much of their reading and writing for them. The real issue of literacy education in the United States concerns poor and minority people. How do we help them develop a variety of literacy strategies which will help them gain some control (or greater control) over their own lives and destinies — always realizing, of course, "that despite the implications and claims to the contrary, equipping adults with rudimentary literacy will probably have a negligible capacity, in itself, to combat low pay, unemployment or general social deprivation" (Levine, 1986, p. 38). The real issue, then, especially of literacy training for the workplace, is power.

When we look behind the official rhetoric concerning literacy training for the workplace, the issue of power becomes obvious. A recent analysis of Census Bureau data by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities shows that the wealthiest fifth of all families received 44% of the national family income in 1988, this was the "largest share ever recorded." On the other hand, the "poorest fifth received 4.6 percent, the lowest proportion since 1954" ("Poverty Gap Widens," 1990, p. 19). Thus, instead of blithely asserting that we need a literate and skilled workforce, we must ask what kind of literacy, for what kinds of jobs, and with what kind of ultimate effect on society's current distribution of power and wealth.

Once we address these questions, we see that the current emphasis is not concerned with issues of power but instead with the domestication and utilization of a shrinking, but necessary, workforce. For what kinds of jobs are literacy training programs preparing the poor and minorities? Again, leaving aside all the official rhetoric about the need for "advanced" literacy, computer, and other skills for the 21st century, we see that most of these jobs require, and will continue to require, the most rudimentary abilities. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics has reported that the largest number of new jobs will be in the sales and service areas: retail clerks, waiters/waitresses, janitors, cashiers, food workers, nursing aides, and so forth (Joint Economic Committee, 1988, p. 26). These are the kinds of jobs that basic literacy training programs prepare adults for. Thus, literacy training for the workplace is to a great extent training for low-status, and usually low-paying, jobs which do nothing to address the question of personal and community power in society. I never cease to be amazed at the utterly unrealistic thinking of certain literacy educators. Do we *honestly* believe that adult literacy programs can help individuals with minimal reading and writing abilities to qualify for the fastest-growing jobs in the United States, that is, to help them become paralegals, medical assistants, physical therapists, computer programmers, and so forth (Joint Economic Committee, 1988, p. 26)? Paul Osterman has made this observation on typical employment training programs:

> A person entering a program most likely has experienced a sporadic work history and employment in a low-wage and dead-end job. Program participation does not change these facts. . . . The participants in these programs remain at the bottom of the income distribution, and there is no evidence that they have been placed upon a new trajectory with respect to lifetime earnings. (Osterman, 1988, p. 29)

Literacy programs which emphasize training for a workplace of largely low-status jobs ignore the many possible alternative functions and uses of literacy, especially its potential for both personal and societal transformation. Such narrow training undercuts the very vitality of literacy; in effect it trivializes it to the lowest common denominator. Literacy, Frank Smith (1989) observes, doesn't guarantee anyone a job, and the kind of literacy needed for most jobs, especially sales and service jobs, can best be learned on the jobs themselves: "Mechanics quickly learn to read their manuals, short-order cooks learn to read orders, and servers learn to write them, even if they would fail standardized reading tests" (Smith, 1989, p. 354). In other words, literacy is a *practice* which enhances specific literacy skills as they are carried out in specific situations (Gee, 1986, p. 730).

My own informal survey of the kinds of reading and writing actually done on the job by workers in my own town supports Smith's contention. After interviewing and observing employees and supervisors in various occupations, for example, supermarket cashiers, stock clerks, waiters and waitresses, counter help in different fast-food restaurants, cooks, bartenders, factory help on the assembly line, carpet layers, and so on, I concluded that the kinds of literacy used on such jobs are not only rudimentary but often very specialized as well. "BB" (bacon burger), "Wich" (fish sandwich), "toss" (french fries), and "cof" (coffee) are the kind of writing the counter workers use and the kind of reading the short-order cooks do at my favorite fast-food lunch stop.

Narrowly focused literacy training for the workplace simply ignores the complex differences among people and communities and the reasons why people want to know how to read and write. Such training attempts to negate socioeconomic (Hunter & Harman, 1979), racial/ethnic (Heath, 1983), linguistic (Gee, 1989), and gender (Kazemek, 1988) differences that exist throughout the nation. It ignores the fact that people often want to learn to read and write better not in order to get or advance in a job but in order to be able to read the Bible (Heisel & Larson, 1984), or read stories to their children, or read and write letters to friends, or for a variety of other reasons. It ignores the fact that "relevance and functionality are highly personal — and probably highly transient — constructs that are nearly impossible to determine without frank and continuous communication with learners" (Hayes & Valentine, 1989, p. 13).

Yet, again and again, governmental, corporate, and educational leaders and spokespersons attempt to define and establish abstract levels and types of functionality that they maintain are mandatory for all citizens. The urgent calls for job literacy training by those in power (see *Illiteracy in America*, 1986, for example) reflect not only a lack of awareness or understanding of literacy but also an arrogant eagerness to impose an extremely narrow perspective of literacy upon the powerless. This imposition reflects James Gee's (1986, p. 731) contention that "claims for literacy are often tacit ways to privilege one social group's ways of doing things as if they were natural and universal."

Such partial perspectives of literacy need to be rejected by those involved with adult literacy education. Limited job literacy and functional skills and levels must not be arbitrarily determined by those in power. Rather, literacy education must be concerned with the whole individual in all of her complexity:

> the possession of skills *perceived as necessary by particular persons and groups* to fulfill their own self-determined objectives as family and community members, citizens, consumers, job-holders, and members of social, religious, or other associations of their choosing. [It involves] the ability to read and write adequately to satisfy the requirements *they set for themselves* as being important for their own lives. (Hunter & Harman, 1979, p. 7)

Literacy and the Universe of Discourse

James Britton (1982) has explored the universe of discourse in terms of how we use both oral and written language. "Transactional" uses of language focus on getting things done with it, whether telling a clerk that you want to try on a particular pair of shoes or, as a short-order cook, reading "BB" and putting a beef patty and two strips of bacon on the grill. "Expressive" uses of language are those which allow us to express something about our uniqueness, about our feelings, hopes, and dreams. Prayers, diaries, journals, and friendly letters are examples. "Poetic" uses of language are those which focus on *making* something with it — stories, poems, jokes, or riddles, for example. Poetic uses of language are an inherent part of our human nature, Britton contends. They are vital, he says, because they allow us to step back from the daily, ongoing, often subconscious, task-focused transactional language situations in which we most often find ourselves. Instead of simply focusing on language as a utilitarian tool to get things done, poetic uses of language allow us to gain broader, and perhaps newer, perspectives on our lives, situations, and possibilities.

Expressive and poetic uses of literacy are potentially "dangerous" to those in power because they foster the imagination and its infinite possibilities. Such uses cause us to begin asking the kinds of "What if's" that Paulo Freire (1973) has shown to be integral to literacy education for critical consciousness. Literacy training for the workplace, on the other hand, is typically limited to basic, transactional skills needed for the job; it is "safe" and ultimately results in the reader and writer being constrained to the same round of literacy acts. Such literacy training programs "in ignorance. . . .view a small portion [of the universe of discourse] & think that All" (Blake, 1966, p. 700).

John Dewey in *Art as Experience* (1934) makes an important distinction between "perception" and "recognition" which is also relevant in this present discussion of different kinds of discourse. He says that "perception" is a process of responsive acts which eventually results in some objective fulfillment; it is an "act of the going-out of energy in order to receive, not a withholding of energy." On the other hand, "recognition" is perception "arrested before it has a chance to develop freely." Recognition, instead of developing into full perception, is "arrested at the point where it will serve some *other* purpose" (Dewey, 1934, p. 52). Most proponents of literacy-as-job-training are really calling for literacy-as-recognition: literacy that uses the power of the written word to serve *someone else's* purpose, not necessarily one's own. For example, in all of the recommendations made in the *Jump Start* report (Chisman, 1989), many of which are viable, the authors make absolutely no acknowledgement of the need to find out what adults themselves want to learn. There is no call for the kinds of regional conferences recommended by Hunter and Harman (1979, p. 106) a decade ago during which adults with limited literacy abilities would be the *speakers* and the literacy experts would be the *listeners*. Instead, the *Jump Start* report describes a variety of things that should be done *to* adults.

Literacy for a Democratic Society

If the present focus upon literacy as primarily a means of job training is illiberal, then what should be the emphasis of adult literacy education? I want to argue a centuries-old position, one argued by visionary and revolutionary poets like Blake and more recently by literacy theorists like Smith (1989). This position may appear to be a literary one and thus irrelevant to the "real world" issues surrounding adult literacy education; however, this perspective allows us to see beyond, to engage in a re-visioning of, the present dull round of literacy training. Blake (1966, p. 98) struggled his whole life to convince others through his art that "the Poetic Genius is the true Man [or woman]," that the human imagination is what truly makes us human and allows us to envision that which is beyond us. The imagination, not the reason, should underpin adult literacy education.

If, as Shirley Brice Heath (1983) has shown us, there are many different functions and uses of literacy and if, as Smith (1989) maintains, literacy doesn't make anyone necessarily smarter, then how can it possibly foster the continuous reconstruction of society? Literacy can only do so through, in the most comprehensive sense of the word, the imagination. Imaginative uses of literacy, or what Britton calls "poetic" and "expressive" uses, offer us the *possibility* of creating and participating in new and, hopefully, better communities and a better nation; they offer us the *possibility* of creating and recreating better selves. "Reading and writing both provide opportunities to exercise the imagination in manners and to extents in no other way possible" (Smith, 1989, p. 357). Just as the dried, shriveled, and drooping sunflowers in my garden in late autumn take on a more vital, richer, and more meaningful nature to me because I am familiar with Van Gogh's sunflowers, so too, at times, do people, situations, indeed, life itself, take on a particular kind of resonance for me because of different literacy experiences. I'm not talking about functional literacy acts here such as reading signs, directions, and so forth, and I'm not forwarding an elitist argument concerning literacy. I'm simply describing one *kind* of literacy that is familiar to anyone who reads poetic and expressive texts. This kind of literacy helps me to see life more imaginatively and metaphorically. It promotes resonance between texts and my own experiences; it offers possibilities for the imaginative expansion of myself and my world. And as such, imaginative uses of literacy are potentially revolutionary and dangerous to the status quo. They give us the power to envision different worlds.

Hunter and Harman (1979) maintained a decade ago that literacy is something which can only be determined by individuals within specific cultural and situational contexts. They argued that definitions of literacy and the programs attendant upon them set forth by "experts" often are reductive in nature and ignore such goals as the development of the imagination and the undertaking of change in oneself and in one's community. Hunter and Harman's analysis is probably even more relevant today than when they set it forth. For the most part, it is the (usually) arbitrary set of transactional objectives set forth by those in power that "drives" adult literacy programs. The programs should, instead, be driven by the imaginative potentialities in literacy use as determined by individuals and their particular communities. These imaginative potentialities may manifest themselves in a great number of different ways, they will not be restricted to some narrow range of uses as determined by experts, politicians, or employers.

Blake warned us over 150 years ago that "Abstract Philosophy [is always] warring in enmity against Imagination" (Blake, 1966, p. 624). When I look at most of the schemes for adult literacy training set forth during the last decade at both the national and state levels I realize how relentless the war against the imagination is, how dangerous those in power perceive it to be. Rather than acknowledging that "imagination is the essence of mental life" and that literacy "can transform the world" (Smith, 1989, p. 357), proposed literacy training schemes such as the one from my own state set forth restricted recommendations:

> Concern about the availability of a qualified work force has resulted in an increased emphasis on workplace literacy and pre-employment skills. . . . During the next four years, it is anticipated that Washington ABE programs will work even more closely with employers on workplace literacy issues by assisting in the conduct of literacy audits, developing specialized curricula and teaching classes for employees on-site and off-site. (Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1989, pp. 14–15)

Adult literacy education which is based upon the creative and potentially revolutionary imaginative powers of individuals is concerned with a great deal more than "the basic skills of the employed" or with preparing persons for the marketplace. Although such literacy education *does* recognize the importance of job reading and writing abilities, it also recognizes the fact that such abilities cannot be divorced from specific contexts which are always social and political. "One doesn't think for oneself; rather, one always thinks for (really *with* and *through*) a group — the group which socialized one into that practice of thinking. And, of course, one 'thinks for' different groups in different contexts" (Gee, 1988, p. 209). With Dewey, we must ask *what* the social arrangements of adult literacy education are for. What exactly are we helping adults prepare to do in what kinds of employment situations? Dewey asked:

> Just what response does *this* special arrangement, political or economic, evoke, and what effect does it have upon the disposition of those who engage in it? Does it release capacity? If so, how widely? . . . Is curiosity awakened or blunted? (Dewey, 1948, p. 197)

Adult literacy education programs which are based upon the imaginative potentialities of humankind as manifest in a rich variety of poetic, expressive, and transactional uses of reading and writing will certainly teach job literacy skills when and if adults need and request them. However, instructors and directors of such programs will not blithely, naively, assume that there are "necessary" skills which are sufficient, or even necessary, into themselves. (See Hayes & Valentine, 1989 for an exploration of the dissonance between students and adult literacy instructors concerning the objectives of literacy education.) Rather, instructors will recognize that such specific skills must be placed in a much broader, more comprehensive universe of reading and writing. This universe, and how to function differently in it, will be what both instructors and adult students will explore and learn. For example, instructors and students will examine what the so-called computerized workplace of the 21st century really demands in literacy ability, and exactly what it demands in mechanical conformity (Gerson, 1988).

As Fingeret and Jurmo (1989) and their colleagues have shown, adult literacy education needs to involve the active participation of adult learners in setting goals, developing curricula, and determining the means of evaluation. The complexity of adult literacy education may indeed involve the development of job literacy skills, but it will include much more than that. It will foster the development of such skills from the inside-out of the social group, and not from the outside-in: the skills will not be imposed upon (or "banked" into) the learners. "In a participatory approach, workers strengthen their oral, reading, writing, analytical, and teamwork skills through active study of issues of direct concern to them. They analyze issues of discrimination, labor laws, wages and salaries, union contracts, maternity leaves, promotion, and so on" (Anorve, 1989, p. 38). They play the whole universe of discourse as they use language to explore, learn, create, and express themselves in a variety of ways.

New Metaphor, New Vision

I have maintained throughout this essay that a primary emphasis upon job-literacy skills in adult literacy education is not only inadequate but also dangerous to the welfare of our nation. It visualizes adults as consumers of someone else's goals, objectives, and knowledge — consumers who seek to become more efficient employees in an unquestioned and unchallenged political and socioeconomic system. Such an approach vitiates Dewey's vision of critically intelligent citizens who engage in the continuous reconstruction of society. But if we reject the metaphor ADULT LITERACY EDUCATION AS CONSUMERISM, what should we put in its place? What governing metaphor would allow us to integrate the democratic vision of Dewey, the universe of discourse as elaborated by Britton, the imaginative ontology of Blake and Frank Smith, and the social and participatory nature of adult literacy development as advocated by Fingeret and Jurmo, Hunter and

Harman, and others? The recent work of Jerome Bruner offers us some insights.

Bruner maintains that we can know the world in two general ways: either through what he calls the paradigmatic mode or through the narrative mode. He says that a great deal is known about the paradigmatic mode of thought since it has developed the tools necessary to form the basis of logic, mathematics, and science. The imaginative application of the paradigmatic mode has led to "good theory, tight analysis, logical proof and empirical discovery guided by reasoned hypothesis" (Bruner, 1985, p. 98). Most adult literacy research, curriculum, instruction, and evaluation is based upon the paradigmatic mode. This is especially true for job literacy programs which place special emphasis upon transactional uses of language, step-by-step reasoning, and so forth.

Much less is known about the narrative mode of thought, Bruner contends. We are just beginning to understand the way people use it to know and create their worlds. The imaginative application of the narrative mode leads to:

> . . . good stories, gripping drama, believable accounts. It deals in human or human-like intention or action and the vicissitudes and consequences that mark their course. It is essentially temporal rather than timeless (as with the paradigmatic mode, however much that mode may use temporal parameters or variables in its operations). And we know much less about it. (Bruner, 1985, p. 99)

Quite obviously, the narrative mode relies more upon expressive and poetic uses of language. It has had less of an impact upon adult literacy education than the paradigmatic mode.

Bruner says that these two modes of knowing are different, and *not* interchangeable. Knowing a person, event, or process through logical and rational thinking is different in kind from knowing them through shared stories. And although Western society has placed much greater emphasis on the paradigmatic, Bruner contends that it is not necessarily a "better" way of knowing than the narrative; it is simply a different way. Indeed, the narrative mode, though typically slighted, plays a vital role in our understanding and construction of ourselves and our world. Bruner maintains that "the nature of a life . . . is a story, some narrative however incoherently put together." Telling stories, narratives of our lives, is what makes us truly human. His "radical hypothesis" is that "the ways of telling and the ways of conceptualizing that go with them [life stories] become so habitual that they finally become recipes for structuring experience itself." He argues that "a life as led is inseparable from a life as told . . . told and retold." (Bruner, 1988, p. 582).

If we seriously consider Bruner's "radical hypothesis," then the metaphor ADULT LITERACY EDUCATION AS CONSUMERISM, which underpins much of adult literacy education and especially job literacy programs, is not viable. It fails because it essentially ignores the narrative nature of human existence. In its place, I want to propose an alternative metaphor: ADULT LITERACY EDUCATION AS STORYTELLING. This metaphor is epistemologically important and, according to Bruner and others (for example, Wagner, 1989), is ontologically grounded as well. Telling stories, being human, and learning are all inextricably linked. Let's briefly explore the extensions of this metaphor.

If we want to conceive of adult literacy education primarily in terms of the narrative mode, as a storytelling process, then we need to look at what happens when people tell stories. First, stories are always told to other people in specific social contexts; they are, by their very nature, social acts. Second, good stories help to connect the past with the present and often offer ideas, guidance, and direction for dealing with the future; this is true in both industrialized and developing, more traditional, societies. Third, good stories are generally modified through collaborative efforts to meet the specific demands and needs of a particular context or situation and audience; thus, good stories are usually individual-social constructions which are developed through constant interaction and negotiation among people. They are "temporal" instead of being "timeless" in Bruner's terminology. Fourth, good stories must be useful in some sense, for example, to delight or instruct, if they are to last; they do not exist for themselves as isolated pieces of knowledge or information. Fifth, good stories make extensive use not only of the literal and empirical but also of the figurative and imaginative; they often help us see the world afresh. Sixth, good stories and the storytelling act are holistic rather than being fragmented; they engage the storyteller and listener(s) in whole, meaningful speech acts.

What occurs in storytelling among people offers us a more generative — and potentially more democratic in Dewey's sense — model of adult literacy education than what happens in more paradigmatic situations (for example, the scientist in her lab, the academic with his scholarly articles and books, or the researcher with her statistical analyses). The metaphor ADULT LITERACY EDUCATION AS STORYTELLING opens up a vista of possibilities that ADULT LITERACY EDUCATION AS CONSUMERISM does not. It allows us to go beyond such narrow categories as "job literacy" and "functional" skills. But more than that, it is a viable metaphor because it reflects in fact *how* most of us know and understand our world. Research, data, and "facts" may help determine to some small degree the way people see, think, and act, but the way individuals and societies effect change is almost always through stories and not data or "facts." Politicians have always known this. Consider ex-President Reagan, the "great communicator/storyteller," and his successful stories to the American people about themselves and the nation, stories which were dramatically contradicted by the "facts" of budget deficits, corruption, military and economic adventurism, and so forth. Similarly, various adult literacy educators who are concerned with social, economic, and political liberation have known this. Consider Paulo Freire (1973, 1985) and his work with the peasants of the third world. Of course, he objectively holds up to them the "facts" of their present existence, for example, poverty and exploitation, and then uses them as a basis for literacy development. However, it is not the "facts" that cause the people to begin to see their situation differently. Rather, by beginning to tell each other new stories about how their lives should be, they see possibilities which require learning, literacy, and action.

ADULT LITERACY EDUCATION AS STORYTELLING allows us to see far beyond literacy training for functional or job-related skills. It allows us to visualize critically involved citizens using the universe of discourse in specific situations to explore, learn, and express themselves to and with others as they pursue literacy goals of their own design. All of us who have had multiple jobs in our lives know that the way we acquire specific functional skills for specific jobs is through a combination of demonstration by others, analysis, (perhaps) reading and writing, *and* storytelling. Indeed, it is usually the storytelling by supervisors and coworkers which best helps us understand the job: its techniques, its social and political context, the "silent rules" governing on-the-job behavior, and so forth. This is true whether we are academics listening to our peers tell us how to achieve tenure or warehouse workers listening to a supervisor tell us how he used to quickly fill orders (and thus got promoted) by arranging the paperwork in a particular, seemingly idiosyncratic, manner. ADULT LITERACY EDUCATION AS STORYTELLING allows us to foster, first and foremost, the imaginative power of people, especially through the narrative mode. At the same time, however, it does not deny the development of the rational power, especially through the paradigmatic mode.

In his testimony before Congress, Jonathan Kozol stressed that community-based and community-controlled programs can harness two strong motivations for becoming literate: work opportunities and parental love.

> Experts have some complicated theories about "adult motivation." I believe that love is the most potent motivation in our souls. Wise government policy, tending towards a Family Literacy concept, might enable us to draw upon the longing of the old to share their memories and heritage with those they love the most. (*Illiteracy in America*, p. 160)

He is talking here of literacy as storytelling, as a means of sharing the past in order to learn about the present as we help to construct possible futures.

Love and commitment to others in our families (see, for example, Auerbach, 1989) and in our communities help us to develop literacy as an imaginative, rational, and, yes, practical potential.

Indeed, as the work of Robert Bellah and colleagues (1985) has shown, the social, spiritual, and psychological isolation of the "radical individualists" who are committed to upward mobility in middle-class America results from their "emptying" themselves of "encumbrances" such as stories, memories, and commitment to a community. A full, "constituted" self, one not isolated and empty of encumbrances, Bellah and his co-authors maintain, is one that is vitally connected to a " 'community of memory,' one that does not forget its past" (Bellah et al., 1985, p. 153). Such a community of memory is based on the telling and retelling of stories which help form the constitutive history of the community, stories which not only offer exemplary models of how to be in the world but also tell stories of pain and suffering received and inflicted. Such "dangerous memories" call the community to alter old evils and injustices. The authors conclude:

> The communities of memory that tie us to the past also turn us toward the future as communities of hope. They carry a context of meaning that can allow us to connect our aspirations for ourselves and those closest to us with the aspirations of a larger whole and see our own efforts as being, in part, contributions to a common good. (Bellah et al., 1985, p. 153)

Adult literacy education perceived metaphorically as an imaginative, social, and communal process of storytelling allows us to begin thinking seriously about the development of what Dewey calls "individual-social" human beings. Together, such human beings constitute communities that are committed to the past, present, and future well-being and learning of all their members. Adult literacy educators — and the public — should settle for nothing less.

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LOCAL STRUGGLES: WOMEN IN THE HOME AND CRITICAL FEMINIST PEDAGOGY IN IRELAND

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While writing this paper I am filled with the current reality of yesterday's possibilities. Ireland has just elected a new woman president, Mary Robinson, a Labour Party member who has consistently struggled for women's rights, for the unemployed, for the youth forced to immigrate from their home, and for all the underrepresented in my country.[1] The election of President Mary Robinson may or may not have a huge social impact, but it dramatizes the shifting ground of formal politics in Ireland. This development has come about, in part, through concrete political struggle, stemming from yesterday's dreams. These dreams were informed by critical education. Both the dreams and the practical developments were struggled over; they must still be struggled over in order that the changes are carried through to the point of bettering the lot of all people — in short, that they are or become radically democratic.

In this article I want to draw attention to the necessarily pedagogical nature of struggle if it is to contribute to a new politics, to a politics that is new in that it achieves radical democracy. I believe that educators have played, and can continue to play, an important role in the social struggle for justice. Critical educators played a part in the political developments that just happened in Ireland. We must now work to insure that these developments be maintained and grow. This means that our practice must speak to a new politics of radical democracy. In order to draw attention to this pedagogical practice, I would like to describe an adult education process I have engaged in with women homemakers, and the critical feminist pedagogy that informed it. I argue that the pedagogical dimension is crucial to Ireland's new democratic politics. Education can play an important role in the transformation from individual isolation to collective social struggle.

The educational process that I intend to outline articulates on a small scale, but in a direct way, a postmodern resistance and the struggle for radical democracy. The women's personal conscientization described in this paper,

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